

Walk on green – take a “ta qing” around the city this spring to see flowers.

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An artist from Suzhou creates vivid images by combining Chinese embroidery with Western oil painting techniques.

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Veteran puppeteer Li Jilin fears the ancient art of shadow puppetry may disappear altogether in Beijing.

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China Protests US Official Contacts With Taiwan

Chinese Ambassador to the United States Yang Jiechi on Tuesday lodged a strong protest with the US government over the way Washington handled the visit of Taiwanese defense chief Tang Yiau-ming.

Yang met US Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Mark Grossman and made serious representations about recent meetings between Tang and US Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz and Assistant Secretary of State James Kelly in St. Petersburg, Florida.

Yang said the US move will certainly encourage separatist forces in Taiwan and poison both Sino-US relations and relations across the Taiwan Straits.

The ambassador noted that the question of Taiwan has always been the core issue of utmost importance and sensitivity in Sino-US relations. To strictly stick to the joint communiques and properly handle the Taiwan issue is the key to healthy and stable Sino-US relations. (Xinhua)

Corrupt Referees Face Disciplinary Action

By Chen Ying

The Supreme People's Procuratorate (SPP) has issued a notice requiring punishment of football referees found guilty of corruption.

The notice stipulates that any referees found to have broken industry regulations are to be handed over to the relevant supervisory department, and their actions should be investigated according to the Criminal Law.

Referees found to have received bribes face prison terms of up to five years under item 163 of the Criminal Law.

Claims of referee corruption have attracted intense coverage in the Chinese press since Geely and Lucheng Football Clubs went public with allegations of match fixing at the end of last year.

Tarantino to “Kill Bill” in Beijing

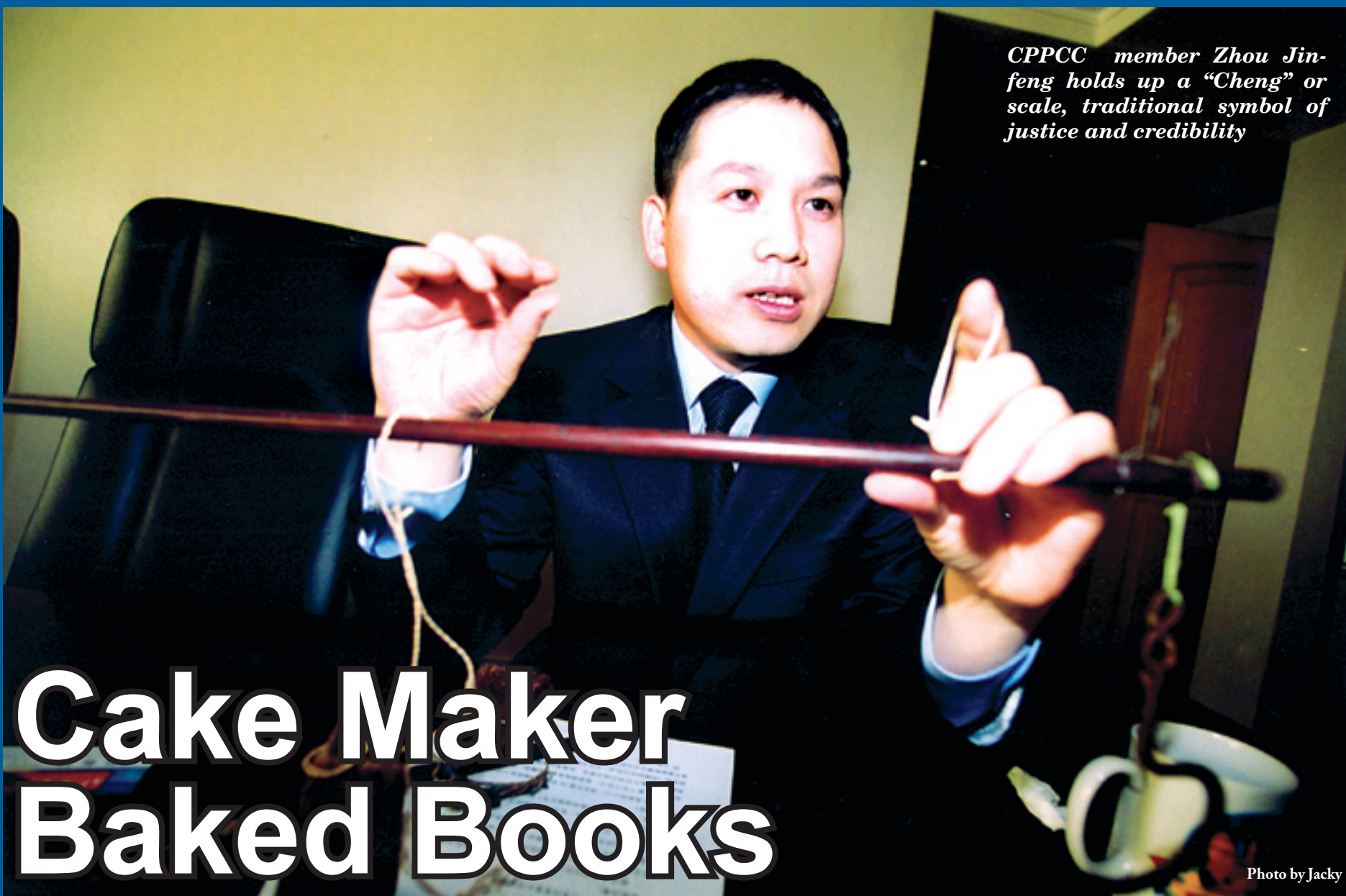
By Zhu Lin

“Uma is my actress. We are like Zhang Yimou and Gong Li,” reveals Quentin Tarantino in an exclusive interview with Beijing Today on page 12.

The director of Pulp Fiction and Jackie Brown was visiting Beijing Film Studios to check out the location for his new movie Kill Bill.

Tarantino, the movie's screenplay writer and director, arrived on March 6. He left for Shanghai on March 8 to meet kungfu actor Gordon Liu (Liu Chia Hui). Shooting in Beijing, one of the four international locations, will start this June. Miramax will release the movie next year. (See Page 12)

A Mongolian Long Tunes and Matouqin concert will be held at the Forbidden City Concert Hall on March 22 and 23, performed by musicians from the Mongolian grasslands. The first 35 people to e-mail us with their comments on Beijing Today, will receive two free tickets. E-mail us at bjtoday@ynet.com no later than Tuesday, March 19.



CPPCC member Zhou Jin-feng holds up a “Cheng” or scale, traditional symbol of justice and credibility

Photo by Jacky

Cake Maker Baked Books

Rotten manufacturer invites bids for brand name

By Shan Jinliang

The demise of a moldy moon cake manufacturer has catapulted issues of transparency and book-keeping onto the floor of China's parliament, the National People's Congress (NPC).

Revelations of multiple accounts and shady business operations at the Nanjing Guan Sheng Yuan Food Company have gathered momentum since the company filed for bankruptcy with the city's intermediate court last October. The court accepted the case on February 6.

The acceptance required Nanjing Guan Sheng Yuan Food Company to clear up its accounts for public scrutiny by February 18.

But as of yesterday no accounts had been posted, said Wang Biao, a *Yangtze Evening News* in Nanjing reporter who is covering the case. Mr. Hu, an official of the Nanjing Bureau of Commerce and Trade, declined to comment on the case or provide any further financial information that had been furnished by the company so far.

Pushed or fell?

Nanjing Guan Sheng Yuan, a 70-year-old brand, garnered national infamy on

September 3, 2001 when CCTV exposed its moon cakes were made with year-old moldy fillings.

The market for moon cakes plunged 40% last year and a nationwide boycott hurt makers Shanghai Guan Sheng Yuan and Chongqing Guan Sheng Yuan, which consumers found hard to tell apart from the disgraced Nanjing firm.

Nanjing Guan Sheng Yuan stopped production two days after the undercover report and later filed for bankruptcy amid allegations of bad business operations, disorderly management and long-term losses.

Blame hounds or scapegoats?

“The bankruptcy application was not due to the so-called bad business operations and disorderly management as the joint venture company was running well.

“If not for the exposure by CCTV, how could bankruptcy occur at such a good company?” said an unnamed official from the Bureau of Commerce & Trade of Nanjing, the supervisory department of the former state company, as reported in Beijing Youth Daily on Wednesday.

A CCTV 1 “News 30 Minutes” undercover journalist said Nanjing Guan Shen Yuan

made profits of 10 million yuan in 2000, but invested less than 1 million yuan.

“We assume it could not go bankrupt even though it made losses. The subjective connection between the scandal and news exposure is wrong. What lies behind the bankruptcy is the company's own problems,” he was quoted as saying in the article.

Workers at the company agree. The scandal first arose from a Nanjing radio report a few years ago, they said.

But back then, Wu Zhenzhong, general manager of the company allegedly said at a meeting, “Money can make any problem disappear.”

Wu, who took office in 1992, allegedly acted to silence further reports and retaliated against those he suspected of leaking the story, firing workers.

Nanjing Guan Sheng Yuan had been booming since China's opening up and reform of the '80s, with an annual sales volume of nearly 20 million yuan.

The company established a joint venture with Wu, a Taiwan businessman of American nationality in 1992. Wu transferred all his shares, 60% of the total, to Lin Hongpeng, his schoolmate in Taiwan.

The Sino-US company was now dominated by the Taiwan businessman. Local media said the bad moon cakes began the next year.

“The investment by Wu is full of water, and Wu stole a large number of machines worth almost 10 million yuan from the company. It would be surprising if the company had not declared bankruptcy,” said Zhou Yulong, a former director of the company, who has followed the scandal closely.

The CCTV report was the symptom, not the cause of the bankruptcy, he said.

Sun Xueyu, a manager of Nanjing Tao Yuan Cun Food Company said the real reason is the company lost its basic honesty and integrity, seeking illegal profits

while ignoring quality.

Famous food brand appeals to non-food companies

Many people are concerned about the disappearance of the traditional Chinese food brand. The joint venture has rights to the brand for 50 years, according to the original contract, however with the bankruptcy of the company, the brand falls into the hands of the Nanjing Guan Sheng Yuan Food Company.

To revive the reputation of the old brand, the Nanjing intermediate court declared that the company should sell the brand, attracting a dozen or so buyers from such varied industries as real estate, computers and auctioning. “The brand still enjoys a high reputation,” said Yang Zongyi, a competitor from Nanjing Fuzhong Company in Nanjing. The moon cake scandal was only one link in a long chain of cases dealing with credit loss. Wu Jinglian, a top economist in China, recently condemned the bad credit situation in China, listing the low contract-keeping rate, frequent cases of loan cheating, illegal commercials, fake financial reports and intellectual property violations among others.

Credit

About 10-20% of the Gross National Product (GNP) is invalid each year due to a lack of a credit system in China, said Zhou Jinfeng, a CPPCC (Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference) member specializing in credit research. Lack of credit has become a bottleneck to China's economic development, the expert concluded. As one of the first to promote China's Honesty & Credit Day to prompt the national awareness of credit keeping, Zhou had filed five motions at the recent NPC and CPPCC sessions.

Experts argued that the government should undertake more responsibility in building a social credit system.



Former factory director Zhou Yulong wonders whether the company can rebuild itself by selling its brand.

Photo by Zhao Yun



Workers of Nanjing Guan Sheng Yuan vent their anger at general manager Wu Zhenzhong over the factory's closure.

Photo by Yang Bo

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Disease Causes Cosmetics Ban

By Xiao Rong

China has issued a ban on the import of cosmetics derived from cattle and sheep which came from countries affected by "mad cow disease".

The Ministry of Public Health and the State General Administration for Quality Supervision and Inspection and Quarantine jointly

released the bulletin last Thursday.

Those cosmetics that have already been imported into China must be removed from store shelves no later than April 20, 2002. The names, quantities and manufacturing enterprises or agents of the commodities should be submitted to provincial health administrative

departments.

As there are no ingredient specifications for some cosmetics imported from countries affected by mad-cow disease, a final list of the products to be banned has not yet been released. The Ministry is now making an investigation to confirm the specific brand names of certain suspected cosmetics.

Health scares over mercury poisoning and mad-cow disease have prompted a warning to consumers not to use cosmetic products containing mercury, hydroquinone or ingredients derived from cattle.

The Consumer Council said although there was no evidence to link mad-cow disease, or bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE),

to cosmetics use, it was responding to a list of products recalled by the Japanese government. Japan's first case of BSE was discovered in September, after which its Government asked cosmetics manufacturers to stop using animal-derived materials made from cows born, bred or slaughtered in countries where BSE had been confirmed.

New Appointment for Chinese FM Spokesman

By Xiao Rong

On his last press conference in the capital Tuesday, Foreign Ministry spokesman Sun Yuxi confirmed the news that he has been appointed Chinese ambassador to Afghanistan.

Sun said he would leave for the new post in Kabul next month with the consent of the Afghan Interim Government.

It is the first time that China has appointed an ambassador to Afghanistan since the Chinese Embassy in Afghanistan was closed in 1979.

As China's first ambassador to Afghanistan in 23 years, Sun said his first task will be to strengthen international anti-terrorism cooperation. The 150-million-dollar financial aid package to Afghanistan which China has promised will also be implemented to help the reconstruction of Afghanistan.

The first 30 million yuan segment of the package will be sent to Afghanistan from northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region this month, revealed Sun.

China Confident in World Expo Bid

By Xiao Rong

Carmen Sylvain, vice president of the Bureau of International Expositions (BIE), voiced her belief that China can host an excellent World Exposition in 2010.

She made the remarks during the BIE's six-day visit to Beijing and Shanghai, on the first leg of their world inspection tour. An on-the-spot investigation for Shanghai's bid to host the 2010 World Exposition is now underway in the city.

Chinese President Jiang Zemin and Premier Zhu Rongji both reconfirmed during their meeting with BIE on Monday that the Chinese government will strictly abide by all commitments made in the bidding report if China wins the bid.

Shanghai successfully hosted the Fortune Global Forum in 1999 and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit in 2001, Jiang noted, stressing that Chinese people have the ability to host the best World Exposition ever.

Shanghai was the first of the six countries that have formally submitted applications for the 2010 World Expo.

Universities to Set their Own Majors

By Shan Jinliang

Six universities, including Beijing University, for the first time gained the right to establish new majors from last Sunday on, without having to consult the Ministry of Education first.

The other five universities are Tsinghua University, Shanghai Jiaotong University, Beijing Normal University, Zhejiang University and Wuhan University.

The Ministry of Education has turned over its duties to the universities in the hope that a more flexible and enthusiastic environment will emerge towards academic programs.

Beijing University will adjust its undergraduate majors for next year by reshuffling and increasing the number of their current majors. The School of Mathematics will not distinguish levels of its students next year, while the School of Chemistry will incorporate its present two majors into one. Starting next year, students at Beida will be able to choose their majors more freely and will not have to declare until at least their second year.

Tsinghua University and Beijing Normal University are also preparing to adjust their majors accordingly.

Sandstorm Warning System to be Set up

By Wang Dandan

China will launch a nationwide monitoring and early warning system for sandstorms this month, which is expected to cut the country's economic losses by at least 245 million yuan (30 million U.S. dollars) per year.

The system, which includes four sub-systems for monitoring, communication, alarm services and technical assurance, will be built in north China's Gansu, Xinjiang, Inner Mongolia, Ningxia, Shanxi and Beijing. All of which are either the origins of China's sandstorms or passageways for them.

Sources in Lanzhou, the capital of Gansu Province, said the system will perform data collection, transmission, processing and database management. It will also be used to study the cause and development of sandstorms, to sound alarms and to evaluate their potential harm.

As a leading member in the system's construction, the Gansu bureau has started to upgrade its meteorological station, install additional radars, build broadband transmission facilities and set up all necessary devices to monitor land moisture and water tables.

A website will soon be opened with updates on the causes and development of sandstorms, as well as ways to protect against them.

Housing Auction Not What It Seems

By Wang Dandan

Beijing Auction Online Company will host an auction to sell an apartment building that was completed in 1998, but which failed to sell on the open market.

"This is a new way of selling apartments. Citizens can get a lower price than in the sales department," said Chen Hongjun, general manager of Beijing Auction Online Company.

The original price from the developer was 3,850 yuan per square meter, whereas the starting price at the auction will be 3,050 yuan with bids in five to ten yuan increments.

While on the surface the auction seems like a cheaper way to purchase an apartment, upon further investigation, Beijing Today found some worrying inconsistencies. Tai Hanjun, the public relations manager of the auction company said that it is the developer who entrusts the auction company to sell the apartment. Later, however, his salesman said that it is the bank who gave the loans to the developer, who in turn authorized the auction company. Because the developer failed to pay the loans in time, the bank took the apartment building back, together with its property rights certificate.

Another problem is that if a purchaser buys the apartment from the auction he has to pay a lump sum without the help of a housing loan, which puts a burden on the average Chinese buyer.

"I can't afford to pay all at one time. I need a loan," said Ge Zhiqiang, a professor at Beijing Foreign Studies University and a perspective buyer.

On top of this, the auction company charges a 5% fee for holding the auctions. When Beijing Today asked some potential purchasers, however, most of them weren't clear about the charge.

The truth is, the higher the price, the higher the charge. Provided you buy an apartment of 70 square meters at the auctioned price of 3,200 per sqm, plus the 5% charge, you have to actually pay 3,360 yuan per sqm.

The last problem is the lack of property management in the community. When informed about this, Ge concluded that he would prefer a project with a good sales department and good property management, regardless of a little higher price.



Bonds for Sale!

National Savings Bonds were issued in Beijing last Sunday. The People's Bank of China released the first of three issues of savings bonds this year, with this installment totaling 60 billion yuan. Beijingers lined up by the hundreds in the early hours on Sunday in the hope of buying the precious secure investments. All of the bonds in Beijing were sold out by the end of the day.

Photo by Chen Shuyi

Drugstore Discounts Attract Attention

By Xiao Rong

"We learnt there is such a cheap drugstore through the newspaper, and we just came around to have a look because we live near here. Most of the medicine here really is cheaper than other drugstores. We are going to start shopping here," an old couple told Beijing Today.

The couple were talking about the newly opened Beijing Develche Drugstore located at the southwest corner of Hong Lingjin bridge of Beijing's Chaoyang district. The store opened with prices 25% lower than the average Beijing drugstore. Since its opening day on March 9th, the store has been overflowing with customers, reporters and even rivals, who want to confirm the cheap prices of its over 4000 brands of medicines. Prices were recorded down for comparison and satisfied smiles could be seen.

Mr. Zhang, a retired worker, also talked about his support of the drugstore. "High prices of medicine in China has been a big problem for a long time. Ordinary people simply can't afford them. Even though the state has reduced the prices of certain medicines, strangely enough, we can't find them in hospitals and most drugstores. We really expect to benefit from this new store."

Even though the Develche Drugstore is the first store to slash its prices so dramatically, they refused to be named by the media as the challenger of overpricing for medicine.

"It's not a promotion for us to cut the original retailing prices of medicines by an average rate of 25%, we're just trying to lower unnecessary circulation costs, like rebates, which have made the medicine prices higher than they should have been," said Zhang Yukuan, manager of Develche Drugstore Co., Ltd.

When asked about how the 25% price cut was made, Zhang told Beijing Today that Develche managed to do this by purchasing a proportion of medicines directly from pharmaceutical factories, lowering operation costs and adopting efficient account settlements.

"In a word, we just tried to minimize links in the sales chain so that more of our saving could be transferred to our customers," said Zhang.

Zhang also predicted the future trend of eliminating distributors in medicine sales. "With the development of the market economy in China, distributors will gradually play not so important a role as before."

However Ms. Wang Jinxia,

secretary general of China Medicine Business Association, expressed the opposite opinion that distributors have been playing a key role in the circulation of medicines, which cannot be eliminated easily.

"Circulation tends to be more and more vital with the division of labor increasingly specific in the modern economy. Wholesalers can therefore create effective value by establishing a supply network and ensuring quality of medicines," Wang said to Beijing Today.

She added that when drugstores become chain stores and establish a distributing network and quality checking system, distribution and sale can be combined.



Happy customers savor cheap drugs

Photo by Zhuang Jian

China Agilent's Fastest Developing Market

By Yang Xiao

Two years after its split from HP, hi-tech company Agilent (China) finally moved out of HP Tower into its own offices last Thursday. On the same day, General Manager Hai Su released the company's annual report and revealed its plans for 2002.

Su told the media, "China has become the most rapid progress market in the world for Agilent. In the world telecommunications and Biotechnology, we had a good record last year. For the year 2002, we will launch a software R&D center at Shanghai Waigaoqiao Free Trade Zone around March." Agilent made the decision to invest 20 million dollars in R&D last year.

The company has also decided to develop its software design center located in Beijing. President of the center Ricardo Gusella said, "According to The Asian Wall Street Journal, India exported 4 billion dollars worth of software products last year, while in China the figure was 130 million dollars. Agilent China can help local software companies increase the sum of exports."

At the press conference Su denied rumors that Agilent would cut budgets of long-term projects. "Although the world faces economic modulation, we still retain an interest in long-term projects. We want to prepare for further success and global recovery."

China Mobile's International Exchange and Cooperation

By Wang Dandan

China Mobile is providing roaming services to its clients in Korea with the cooperation of Korea KTF on the GSM-CDMA networks of the two countries. The move underlines the achievements both sides have made in the combination of the different systems.

Chinese mobile users can alternate between GSM-CDMA. And when they go to Korea to watch the World Cup, they can easily phone friends in China.

The innovation gives rise to further competition between China Mobile and China Unicom, who regards CDMA as its hot technique.

At present, GSM is used in most other countries and users can roam freely. For countries like Korea who use the GSM technology standard, a special solution is a must.

Up to now, the only way for users of the different standards is to use special GSM /CDMA system mobile phones, which is the method taken by China Mobile.

Chinese users simply insert the China Mobile SIM cards into the specially designed mobile phones when in Korea.

The adoption of the system marks a new level in international telecommunications cooperation and efforts to promote research and implementation of the international standards on the third generation mobile communications.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

New Regulations Favor IPR

By Yang Xiao

March 15 is designated as Consumer's Day in China. It is a day when people can report their experiences in buying fake or bad quality products, and perhaps have something done about it. Every Chinese can relate one or two such experiences. For the software industry, pirate software is a year-round headache, but this year's Consumer's Day brings some good news for software companies. Software companies are welcoming an amendment to the Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Computer Regulation, which took effect at the beginning of this year.

Some street peddlers of pirate software are worried about the new law, with rumors circulating that they could face fines of up to 50,000 yuan if caught. "In fact the peddlers could only be fined no more than five times their illegal income," said Randy Ma, chief representative of the U.S. non-profit organization Business Software Alliance (BSA). "But the software companies now have the ammunition to tackle the illegal end users."

"The China Copyright Law was first issued in 1991. At that time, end users of pirate software were not liable according to the regulation. They were prohibited to distribute such software, but they were free to use it," Ma said. "The new computer software protection regulation enables the copyright owner to file lawsuits against entities and individuals who copy and use unauthorized software." He added that software is the heart of the knowledge-based economy; effective protection of software copyright will encourage creativity and local economic development.

BSA has seven member companies in China, and Ma often represents their interests to sue end users. "Actual profit-making companies, such as advertising and publishing companies are our main targets."



Adobe's Jordan Pi

Adobe, the second largest PC software company in the U.S., is the BSA member that suffers most from software piracy. Over 95% of Adobe's popular Photoshop and Acrobat programs in use in China is illegally produced. "Our products have a great reputation, but generate relatively little money," Jordan Pi, Country Manager of Adobe's Beijing office told *Beijing Today*.

Pi planned to hire ten staff in 1999, but to date only five people are employed in the office. "The number of our employees is directly related to our sales record," said Pi. Adobe CEO Bruce Chizen once said that Adobe would spend 750,000 dollars to research a simplified Chinese version of its products, however if sales cannot meet the cost, he would rather halt business in the Chinese mainland. There is heavy pressure from head office, and Pi needs to be able to show evidence of progress.

His chief task is fighting piracy of his company's products. He allies with software distributors in every province. These companies can earn income both from the fines levied on those pirate dealers and from normal sales. Pi has just dealt with a case in Guangzhou. Twenty-three large-scale advertising companies there were found to have been using pirated Adobe products. Pi and the local Administration of Commerce and Industry (ACI) warned them and negotiated with them to buy legitimate Adobe products. Those companies feared the ACI would seize their PCs, and agreed to buy some at first in the hope of curtailing any legal action. Each company reserved one copy of the software. This is a start, but Pi clearly still has much work to do. "Users of pirated products are potential customers. You cannot antagonize them. Otherwise, they will switch brands."

So far Pi says he is making satisfactory progress. Sales volume doubled in 2000 and increased by 40% in 2001. "Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Shenzhen are our main areas of business. We will next enlarge our business scope to include Wuhan, Nanjing,



BSA's Randy Ma

Hangzhou and other second-tier cities. Some companies from those cities have already contacted us to buy some copies," said Pi. "The strengthened regulation is certainly helping us to battle software piracy. Meanwhile local administrations of commerce and industries are also cooperating with us."

Companies such as Adobe are working hard to eliminate the negative influence from pirate products. The central government is also taking measures to tackle



A woman selling pirated products near Full-Link Plaza. Adobe's Pi says he is accustomed to such scenes

Photos by Chen Shuyi

the problem. A memorandum released last year urges government departments to buy legal software, stressing that software is a part of a company's fixed assets. BSA cooperates by holding Software Asset Management training courses with China National Copyright Administration Bureau and its local branches. However, some insiders complain that there is a lack of government and legal support when enforcing the regulations. "We must gath-

er evidence using irregular methods. We can pose as a technical employee or a customer seeking to buy some of their products. However the courts do not accept evidence gathered in such manners. Even the new regulation cannot solve this matter," said one insider. "The next step should be to focus on how to gather evidence of use of pirate software. This will really help us to dismantle the pirate product supply chains."

AUTO INDUSTRY

Xiali Vows to Hold Beijing Taxi Market

By Jiang Zhong

Tianjin Automotive Industrial (Tianqi), manufacturer of the popular Xiali cars, is to launch a new line with the aim of increasing the company's share of the taxi market. Based on the Xiali 2000, the new models will be larger and have cleaner emissions.

Kuang Zhaoming, assistant general manager of Tianqi, told *Beijing Today* that claims by media outside Tianjin that Xiali would lose its dominance of the Beijing taxi market because of its inability to deliver a clean emission vehicle were ridiculous.

On the contrary, Kuang said Xiali would launch a positive strategy to expand its share of the taxi market around China. Expensive taxis are seen by some as a way of improving the city's looks before outsiders by some Chinese cities. That was an unhealthy phenomenon. Even for an Olympic host city, cheap taxis should still be developed. However successful businesses must follow the trend of the market, so Xiali would unveil the new taxi model soon.

Xiali sold over 10,000 cars this January, however the figure fell to around 7,000 in February. Kuang said that this did not indicate that Xiali's success was a temporary phenomenon, citing the seven-day Spring Festival holiday and fewer days in the month as the major causes for the lower figures.

Kuang claimed that lower prices were not the sole reason for Xiali's success in the market. Consumer's trust in the reliability of Xiali products was the key propelling force for Xiali's development, he maintained.

He added that a greater diversity of auto products would prove necessary for the devel-



Xiali assistant GM Kuang Zhaoming leans against the newest Xiali 2000, "Xiali sells 350 cars a day on average, 14% of which are for the taxi market."

Photo by Zhao Shiyu

opment of China's national auto industry after entry to the WTO. Differences in income determine the differences in demand for the company's family cars. Even though the public were being encouraged to buy cars with loans of foreign capital, as People's Bank of China governor Dai Xianglong said at the just concluded Fifth Session of the Ninth National People's Congress, most consumers would still opt for economy cars.

Kuang also pointed out that China has the world's largest potential auto market. Every model, luxury or economy, has its respective profitable niche. Even in the mature market in the U.S., there is a strong market for relatively cheap cars. So Tianqi would not stop manufacturing the products, including the Xiali 2000, at present.

However he conceded that Xiali might lose some of the taxi market, as a result of what he described as the local governments' ill-considered schedule for updating the city's taxi fleet. But economy cars were advantageous in terms of environmental protection, which conforms with Beijing's Olympic commitment. He believed Xiali products would be the choice of more and more people with the future development of Chinese auto market.

As to the new taxi model, Kuang said that the emission level met the criteria of level two of the European emissions standard, but the research had been carried out to further improve the model's performance in this regard. If necessary, he said the group would import technologies or engines directly from Xiali's partner, Toyota.

Tianjin Toyota, the joint venture between Xiali and Toyota, would begin manufacturing the fifth generation product of Toyota's NBC family car in October 2003, however Xiali products with innovative technologies would continue running out of the assembling lines, he said.

Lin Yin, General Manager of Xiali, said that Xiali would continue as the flagship of Tianjin Auto Group, and that production of Xiali products would not stop.

Tianqi Group and Xiali

Established in 1982, Tianqi Group is now the third largest auto manufacturing enterprise in China. Its output of autos and engines last year amounted to 230,000 and 270,000 units respectively.

Tianjin Xiali, the offshoot of Tianqi Group, will take 50% share of the Tianjin Toyota that will be brought into operation next year.

Products include Xiali, Xiali 2000 and Vitz. Tianjin Toyota will manufacture the NBC 5 family.

This January, Xiali triggered another round of price wars in the Chinese auto market by slashing prices of its 3-cylinder, 1.0-liter models.

Xiali currently dominates the Beijing taxi market with its economy model, which can meet only the level one European emission standard at present. Recent media reports claimed that Xiali would be forced out of the Beijing taxi market due to its inability to deliver a level three car.

By Jiang Zhong

Companies Vie for Seats at Breakfast Table

By Shan Jinliang

One hundred and sixty companies from Beijing, Tianjin, Jiangxi and other provinces and even overseas have thrown their dough into the fryer in the city's big Chinese breakfast contest.

Beijing has invited them all

to bid to become Beijing's breakfast kings. Four winners will be named next month.

"We will push forward 200 sites for breakfast," said Yin Xucai, section chief of the Service & Consumption Section under the Municipal Commerce Commission.

"We'll develop breakfast kiosks and vehicles to construct a service network and foster chain companies."

The Breakfast Project requires all bidders:

* demonstrate a minimum 8 million yuan capital

* invest for at least five years
* serve no fewer than 30 breakfast snacks.

Among the 10 guidelines for investors, registered capital, capital input and reasonable profit estimation come as top priority. Anyone who cannot come up with the 8 mil-

lion yuan will be ignored.

Deputy Mayor Zhai Hongxiang said the project would serve as an important step in reducing the unemployment rate of the city. It is expected that the Breakfast Project will provide 100,000 jobs this year alone.

Foreign Teachers Glean Extra Opportunities

By Wang Dandan

Foreigners are moving their expertise from international companies, into education, hospitals and research institutions. According to data from the Beijing Education Committee in 2000, about 1,500 foreign teachers were working in Beijing. That increased to 2,200 last year.

With WTO and the Olympics, there will be a demand for even more. It would be better if another 1,000 teachers came, said Du Songpeng, a staff member of the Beijing Education Committee.

According to the Committee, there are two requirements for foreign teacher visas: at least a bachelor's degree and 2-3 years relevant work experience.

Many schools or groups fail to check teachers' professional quality and even foreigners with tourist visas have been known to go to schools to teach.

To assure education quality, Beijing Education Committee will participate in the International Cooperation & Exchange Meeting in Australia to employ top foreign teachers. Beijing will also cooperate with foreign recruitment agencies to start communication between China's educational institutions and their foreign counterparts.

Beijing will amend policies towards foreign students in China, allowing them to teach during their study period to meet the social demand.

Tom Snaps up Distributor, Broadcasts Interactive TV

By Zhao Hongyi

Hong Kong entrepreneur Li Ka-shing is marching headlong into the mainland entertainment market. His company Tom.Com Ltd. bought half of Guangzhou Hong Xiang Audio & Video last week.

Then on Monday Tom.Com Ltd. launched China Interactive TV, a broadband TV service targeting the market and audiences around the world through its 50%-owned subsidiary, Shanghai Maya Online Broadband Network (Shanghai Maya).

The Guangzhou-based Hong Xiang is China's leading manufacturer and distributor of music, film and TV, with a 10-year track record. Its library footage of movies, TV programs and educational documentaries totals more than 4,000 hours. Library footage is licensed from media companies including Universal Music Group, EMI, the BBC, Golden Harvest, Shaw Brothers and local producers and television stations such as CCTV.

Shanghai Maya developed its broadband TV project with part-

ner Inter-Continental Publishing. The China State Council Information Office and the Broadcasting and Film Bureau have extended their full support to China Interactive TV, carried on the website www.cnitv.com and available to 300,000 households in China.

The Hong Kong based Tom.Com Ltd. headed by its Tom.Com portal site, pioneered building a portfolio of online and offline media assets through acquisitions and "organic growth". Its business includes sports marketing, outdoor media, print media and Internet portals.

Tom.Com Ltd. has become the No.1 local sports marketing company, built China's largest outdoor media network and acquired and operated Internet portals. It is also building Greater China's largest Chinese print media platform and bought a large print media group in Taiwan.

"We aim to build ourselves into the leading music and entertainment group in Greater China," said chief executive officer Sing Wang of Tom.Com Ltd. in Beijing after the Hong Xiang acquisition.



James Beazley (left), TMP China Manager; Anthony Lewis (center), TMP Great China Manager; and Alistair Sutherland (right), TMP Asia & Pacific Manager. Photo by Zhuang Jian

Monster Moves into China

By Wang Ling

It is not a genuine monster. But it looks like a monster in its field. Monster.com — the biggest job website in the world — is dipping its terrible toe into the mainland manpower market.

Alistair Sutherland, Asia-Pacific President of Telephone Marketing Programme (TMP) Worldwide, the owner of Monster.com, visited Beijing last week looking for a Chinese partner to introduce his Monster.com to China.

Mr. Sutherland acclaimed that Monster.com has over 20 million resumes and 1.5 million job opportunities in its databank. Its hit rate reached 41 million in January.

The US registered TMP Worldwide has an asset over \$4 billion dollars and has already knocked the markets of the European countries, India, Singapore and Hong Kong.

Sutherland believed Monster.com will propel the manpower market of China.

"Monster can bring advanced management experience and promote the standardization of human resources market in China." Said Sutherland at a press meeting held in Beijing

during his stay here.

"Undoubtedly, Monster.com will be a strong competitor for the manpower websites in China. But competition is beneficial. It can make the manpower market of China mature as soon as possible." Aggressively expressed the manpower commander.

Monster.com is not the only one coming to China.

A statute enacted in October last year permits foreign headhunter corporations to cooperate with human resource companies in China, which officially open the door of the market to overseas players.

Korn/Ferry International Corporation, another US based manpower company, is also preparing to establish a joint venture here. Details are still under negotiation.

Currently, 4,100 human resource companies and more than 300 human resource websites exist in China. "Although the number is great, the sizes of these companies are very small," said Liu Wenbin, an official from the Ministry of Personnel.

China Experiments with Certificates

By Zhao Hongyi

Fifteen students of Beijing Xuanwu No.1 Vocational High School received City & Guilds (C&G) certificates from their principal earlier this month. The 2,400-student vocational school has finance & accounting, foreign languages and hotel services & management faculties.

"Basically, our school is a senior high school," said Zhang Kehui, school principal. "Students are studying here grade 10-12.

"They can either take the national high education enrollment examination for higher education, or find a job in society in the days of graduation, upon their decision and capability."

The City & Guilds certificates Zhang's students received were issued by the London City & Guilds Association through its Chinese agent - China UK Vocational Qualification Award & Assessment Office, a joint venture between the association and China's Ministry of Labor & Social Security.

"Students have to receive professional technical evaluation and then paper examination on their knowledge," said Yang Jun, office deputy director. "We started cooperation and issuing the certificates in China in 1998 and enjoy a rapidly increasing market here.

"We strictly control the number. On average, we accept only a little bit more than 1,000 applications annually," said Yang.

"You know the market is increasing but the quality (of the certificates) is decreasing. We have to maintain the quality of our certificates."

Yang said their office is in contact with an English training certificate institution from the United States.

"Through cooperation with C&G, both the qualities of our teachers and graduates have been lifted to another level in consequence of the reform and opening up of our country," said Zhang.

"This is more important to the long-term development of our school," she said.

Aside from City & Guilds, the Xuanwu school is also ready to offer the training program and certificate of the London Chamber

of Commerce Examination Board Office (LCCIEB) in accounting, business English and travel English.

"Principally, we welcome and encourage cooperation in education like this," said an official of the vocational and adult training department of the Ministry of Education, who declined to be named.

"The market potential is huge considering the huge amount of labor in China and our determination for modernization."

According to the official, her ministry is preparing to cooperate with the Ministry of Labor & Social Security and Ministry of Personnel for a better quality examination and certification on the vocational training market.



Fifteen students of Xuanwu No.1 Vocational High School receive their certificates. Photo provided by Li Shuling

CBD to Hire CEO for Expansion

By Wang Dandan/Wang Ling

Beijing Central Business District (CBD) Construction Company will invite applications for a general manager, two vice general managers, according to the Beijing CBD Administrative Office. The annual salary of the general manager could be more than 1 million yuan, said Yang Shanhua, who works at the office.

Beijing CBD Construction Company will construct and develop the infrastructure of the area, the city's intended center for commerce, financial, trading and information groups equipped with office buildings, hotels and apartment buildings.

The four square kilometer business district was approved by the State Council in 1993. It will extend to include Chaoyang Lu, Tonghuihe Nanlu, Guanghua Lu and Guandongdian Nanlu, said Yang.

Insurance Firm Hires Foreigners

By Wang Ling

The biggest insurance company of China is finally recruiting foreign personnel.

Life Insurance Company of China (LICC) seeks to strengthen its global capabilities. LICC survey wants to hire foreigners to work in information technology, capital management and risk assessment.

Ping An and Tai Kang have already hired foreigners as their general actuarial and other important staff. Despite being a state company, LICC still hopes to attract foreign talent.

"The government has made some specific policies for engaging high-grade financial elite," Nie Qingshan, manager of the human resources department of LICC told Beijing Today. "So LICC can afford a competitive salary and generous benefits for foreign elite staff."

Investment Agencies Come Together

By Shi Xinyu

Fifteen foreign investment promotion agencies from different cities held their first annual convention on Thursday as founder members of the National-wide Investment Promotion Agency Meeting (NIPAM) at the Ascott Hotel.

Among attendees were China International Investment Promotion Center, Beijing International Investment Promotion Council and foreign investment service centers from Shanghai, Tianjin and Guangzhou.

NIPAM aims at building communications among agency members, providing more professional services for foreign investors and nationwide bettering of the investment environment.

Canadians Are Coming

By Zhao Hongyi

University of Alberta (UoA) from Canada explores academic and business exchanges with their counterparts in China.

Led by Dr. Rod Fraser, President of UoA and who is on his 21st tour to China, the delegation signed a memorandum with Nankai University and the National School of Administration for co-operation.

An agreement with Beijing Hui Cai Middle School proposes an English Language Training Program.

Cooperation with the Chinese Academy of Forestry (CAF) will help rehabilitate the degraded ecosystem in China.

UoA will receive two groups of government officials and industrial managers from Helongjiang for 6 months training programs, according to the university press release.



Xinhua Photo

Artists to China: Learn from Us

Chinese performing artists should learn from their peers in other countries to make the most of international touring opportunities, said the chairwoman of the International Society for the Performing Arts (IPSA) on Saturday.

"Chinese arts administrations and companies should learn more about commercial operations and marketing to meet the western market demand," said Elizabeth Bradley at the IPSA International Forum and First China Performing Arts Fair, which opened in the city on March 8.

The fair was the largest art gala ever held in China, with 63

Society members from 13 countries and more than 200 arts companies from China including Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan.

Bradley said to pinpoint surging interest and demand in the Western market, China should study the rules of the international market, especially contract negotiating two years ahead of performance. Chinese companies should maintain long-term contacts with foreign arts companies through video introductions and partial shows of their performances.

"The gala is just a start for further exchanges and cooperation," said Bradley. (Xinhua)

Students Pay Respects to Dead Donors



Anatomy students Zhu Yiming and Jiang Yinan stand in silence

Photo by Luan Tonglin

By Sun Ming

In silent tribute, 60 anatomy students bowed to the dead bodies donated for their dissection at a ceremony in the dissection room of Peking Union Medical College on Thursday.

Fifteen bunches of white chrysanthemums were placed on 15 tables. White chrysanthemums symbolize purity. To express their grief and respect to the donors, the students held the ceremony before their anatomy lesson.

It was the first time all the remains adopted in anatomy lessons were donated in Beijing medical university history.

"Thanks to these volunteers, we have more opportunities to operate in anatomy lessons than others. In our university, four students can

share one cadaver," said student Bao Weiping.

"While in most medical universities, more than 10 students share one. We must study hard to repay the donors' dedication."

Peking Union Medical College set up its donation office on May 4 1999. Three thousand registered and 1,500 finished notarization.

"They decide to donate their bodies after death," said Cao Chenggang, director of the office. "Among them, 93 volunteers have already donated their bodies."

"Anatomy lessons are very important for these would-be clinicians. But we often worry about the sources of bodies."

The college still needs more remains for educational use, said Cao,

also an anatomy professor. "We have to replace the bodies every semester. One body can't be used longer than one semester. If dissected entirely, they are burnt."

According to the donation office, all these bodies are contributed with no compensation. Most registrants are intellectuals and college students. The youngest registrant is an 8-year-old Beijing girl.

Scholar David Crook, who settled in Beijing from England, donated his body to medical science two years ago. He is the only foreign donor.

According to the Beijing Remains Donation Office, a Forest of Steles to commemorate these donors will be established at Changqingyuan (长青园), near the Jingshen Expressway (Beijing to Shenyang).



Cui Xianrong (left) helps his younger brother Cui Xiangwei work on a translation issue

Photo by Chen Shuyi

Opera Dubbers Chase Dream of Fine Dialogue

By Su Wei

"Words not action" is the motto of the Cui brothers.

Cui Xiangwei and his elder brother Cui Xianrong are busy working on preparations for their restaged English-dubbed performance of Peking Opera for foreigners in the coming month.

The Cui brothers know only too well that most foreigners who visit the city only see excerpts full of action and acrobatics, but few arias and dialogues.

"The cream of Peking Opera is its language. Actions are only supplementary to the play," said the elder Cui, an actor of lao sheng (a bearded male role in Peking Opera) since he was 12.

Having talked with his younger brother, who has two years' experience of simultaneous interpretation in Geneva, the language barrier was recognized as the key problem by both.

"I then asked my elder brother what about dubbing? With a pair of earphones, foreigners can hear every word of the libretto in English simultaneously from translators with different roles.

"They can also appreciate the wonderful actions at the same time."

At first, the brothers talked with Liyuan Theater, a special theater for Peking Opera. But they refused.

The brothers had to record some part of Peking Opera and then tried to dub it into English.

"It really works!" they concluded.

Encouraged by the trial, they started up One-tone Culture Exchange Company together with their friends in November 2000.

But the obstacles linger.

"The translation is much more difficult than translation of literature. It would be a failure if the translated version did not have the character of opera language – balance and rhythm.

The younger Cui believes plain translation is kind of cheating the audience. It sometimes took days to find the best translation for a single word.

*"I love the lake in February
The wind is soft and rains like thread.
'Tis pure luck to share a ferry
Those are fated, who share a bed."*

He chants the translated sentences of the "Legend of the White Snake", their first English-dubbed play.

The understanding of the story of the play is important to avoiding time lags between the actors and dubbers.

"Although our dubbers are native speakers and experienced Chinese interpreters, they still need to understand the plot – a love story between a human being and a snake," said the younger Cui.

More problems. They considered installing headsets United Nations-style, but then found few theaters were willing to agree.

With the help of friends, they designed and ordered five hundred pairs of wireless earphones themselves.

The debut of an English-dubbed performance in April last year became the focus of the media, but performances stopped after one month.

"We lacked enough money to pay the rent and the actors and dubbers. This was never about making profits!" said the younger Cui.

However, the brothers have not lost hope. They believe it is only natural for a new form to struggle at first to gain acceptance.

Teens Stand up for Stardom

By Ivy Zhang

The line outside Beijing Film Academy stretched around the corner with starry-eyed Chinese teenagers dreaming of fame and fortune.

It was the first of four days' recruitments at the academy last Tuesday. More than 500 showed up in the morning alone.

The application and examination is still under way.

The performance department as always took the spotlight. About 4,000 people applied to this department last year, but only 30 were recruited for four years' study and a Bachelor of Arts degree, according to an academy official.

The situation is nearly the same this year.

Only tougher.

No age limit is imposed on students, but the majority were young people. The youngest was 13 years old, according to the university.

"Three criteria are set for recruitment, namely personal quality, skills and image," said Zhang Huijun, Vice Chancellor of Beijing Film Academy.

"Basic personal quality, mentally and professionally, is foremost. Hand-some guys might not meet our requirements. But we tend to recruit young and handsome 'idol-type' talent at this time."



Photo by Cui Jun

Free Plane Tickets for Sick Baby Girl

By Sun Ming

United Airlines has given a 2-year-old Chinese girl round-trip air tickets to the United States.

Zhou Kexin from Gansu Province will receive free medical treatment through the American Hope Foundation.

Kexin becomes the 11th Chinese patient to receive free round-trip air tickets from United. She was diagnosed with a serious heart condition at the age of 7 months.

Today, she weighs 17 kilos (37.4 pounds). On her father's RMB1,000 salary, the family could not afford treatment. The family contacted the American Gloria's Place of Hope Incorporation through the Internet in April 2001. The Foundation invited Kexin to the USA and will sponsor all her medical expenses.

The family still could not afford the air tickets. After reading a report in the local news about United Airlines sponsoring a 4-year-old Beijing girl to the US last year, Kexin's parents contacted the airline last month.

On the scheduled March 10 flight, United Airlines has also arranged oxygen apparatus for Kexin.

"If all goes smoothly, little Zhou will return to China in a couple of weeks," her father said in a United Airlines press release.



Yang Naihui, who has been making silk figures for 40 years, displays her handiwork

Photo by Kang Xuesong

Top Folk Artists Demonstrate Skills

By Ivy Zhang

Top Chinese folk artists will showcase their work including Chinese knots, mini kites, dough modeling, color eggs and paper lantern at the first Chinese folklore culture and art festival.

The festival runs 10 am-3 pm daily until Mon-

day March 18 in the second basement of Ganjiakou Building, west of Beijing Zoo near Xizhimen subway stop.

A total of 15 artists will appear, with five or six per day demonstrating on site. All 15 will attend this weekend.

Victim Turns Tables on Would-be Rapists

By Sun Ming

A smooth-talking Shandong woman not only escaped a gang of muggers and rapists, but then led police back to capture all three last Thursday.

Wang Li, 22, was still shaking as she narrated her experience later in Tiantan Police station.

Invited to dinner at her young sister's family on March 7, Wang said she left around midnight.

"My family isn't far from my young sister's, only about 100 meters' walk. So I didn't ask her husband to escort me home."

Wang met three men. "They barred my way and robbed me of my beeper. I was nearly stunned by the sudden turn of events. Then they grabbed me and dragged me to an out-of-the-way building site.

"I realized that they wanted to rape me. I knew nobody could rescue me but myself. An idea occurred. I said 'Lads, you haven't seen the world. I have a serious infection!' I tried to conceal my inner terror."

What Wang said frightened the men. They dared not touch her any longer. Then Wang asked for a cigarette from one of them and fabricated a story.

"I told them I made a living wandering from place

to place when I was 15 years old. And I had a boyfriend who even killed several people. He was arrested just a few days ago so I wanted to make new friends."

One of the three asked Wang whether she would betray them. "In order to convince them, I showed them a scar on my arm. I'm loyal to my friends. This is the proof," I said. Now they believed me.

Actually, the scar was the result of Wang's failed suicide attempt three years ago over a broken love affair. She had left her hometown in Shandong Province to come to Beijing where she today works as the waitress of a restaurant.

To Wang's surprise, the men believed her entirely and asked her to be their elder sister.

Wang then invited them over to her family for a chat. But first, the men bought snacks and drinks to celebrate their new acquaintance.

"After an hour's chat, I suggested they live with my family and I live with my young sister's family. They agreed. To insure my safety, one gangster named Lu Bin even escorted me in person."

After Lu left, Wang went straight to Tiantan Police Station. The men were arrested.

Foreign Affairs

By Su Wei

A rugby seven-a-side tournament is coming to the city for the first time this weekend with a total 16 teams competing at the Olympic Stadium.

International Rugby Union (IRB) World Sevens Series is holding its sixth tournament. Last year, it went to Shanghai. It is probably the first time for most of the teams to come to Beijing and they are eager to perform well at the tournament and experience the unique and historic culture Beijing

Rugby Teams Pack for Capital City

has to offer.

"Top teams from Australia, New Zealand, South Africa will impress the Chinese people. The attendance of the best players of the Sevens – Waisali Serevi of Fiji and Eric Rush of New Zealand – will create a speedy and tense game," said Catherine Finch, currently assisting the Chinese Rugby Union.

Finch said it would be exciting if Beijingers come along to support their national team. "Although each match will only take 20 minutes, I still be-

lieve the Chinese people will really have fun."

Finch hopes the matches will attract 10,000-plus spectators.

"Since each match only takes 20 minutes in the same large pitch, shorter than the normal rugby games, it is a test of endurance and techniques for all the players."

Rugby is normally played by teams of 15, but the sevens game is a more open variant of the traditional sport.

The Chinese Rugby Union is using

the opportunity to promote rugby in China and promote more exchanges between the best players and best teams.

Vernon Pugh, IRB Chairman, sees holding the tournament in Beijing as "a right time for a right sport".

The 16 teams will be divided into four pools and the winners of different level competitions including Shield, Bowl, Cup and Plate will be decided on March 17, based on marks awarded for the two days.

How Deep is Your Love?

Deathbed dilemmas test breaking points of two families

By Chen Ying

Two stories of two families touched a nerve in *Beijing Youth Daily* at the end of last month. Both concern the loss of a loved one, in one case a daughter, the other a son. The difference is in the parents' reactions.

Story I

Knowing the great personal loss, a father donated 30 percent of his own skin to save his son after the young man had suffered severe burns rescuing a disabled friend.

Yang Qingxiang, who ran a motorcycle repair shop in Jiangning District of Nanjing in Jiangsu Province, was fixing friend Ding Wenfu's bike late at night on January 25.

During the repair, Ding decided to smoke. The spark from his lighter ignited petrol in the shop and a fire raged out of control.

After escaping, Yang returned to the fire and rescued Ding, who is disabled. Both had almost stopped breathing when they rolled out from the fire.

Yang's parents, Yang Ruiyin and Duan Chuanmei, went to Nanjing No.1 Hospital and found their son had lost consciousness with severe burns.

Dr. Xu Changzheng said 62 percent of Yang's body had third-degree burns.

Although Yang's life was temporarily saved, he needed skin graft surgery as soon as possible.

Yang's first surgery on January 26 used skin from others costing 30,000 yuan. But Yang's body rejected the skin.

The doctor mentioned again on January 29 that Yang urgently needed skin surgery. After discussions, the parents decided to donate their own skin. Inspections found Yang Ruiyin's skin more suitable than his wife's.

During the next 20 days, the father lay on the operating table three times for his son. The removals can do extreme harm to the father's healthy body functions.

But it still wasn't enough.

The doctor also had to cut skin from the mother's right arm. "The operation was very successful. The rejection, our original worry, didn't reoccur in a severe way," said Dr. Xu.

Now the family faces money problems. The parents spent 100,000 yuan on surgery, mainly borrowed from others. They received some help after local media reports. An old lady left 2,000 yuan in the Yangs' ward without leaving her name. Colleagues of Yang Ruiyin and his other daughter also contributed.

Story II

Ruan Weidan, at 23, discovered she had a malignant tumor on her right leg in October 1999.

Her parents spent nearly 40,000 yuan on 20 chemotherapy treatments and an operation to cut out the tumor at Shanghai Ruijin Hospital.

Her former boyfriend A Le heard of Ruan's condition and went to Shanghai to look after her. He himself spent 10,000 yuan.

The cancer came back in November 2001.

The hospital diagnosed it would spread without immediate treatment to cut out the tumor. Ruan would also need two chemo treatments before surgery and 18 after, totaling 200,000 yuan.

Ruan's parents refused to sign the consent form for the operation. They left her alone in the hospital.

Ruan, of Zhuji County, Zhejiang Province, sought out others' help. She contacted Haipo Shirt Factory in Fengqiao Town of Zhuji. She approached the factory manager, who promised to contribute 5,000 yuan.

"I thought there was something wrong with my ears," said Ruan. "And I asked him again. He repeated it was 5,000." Soon she had raised more than 40,000 yuan. But this wasn't still enough.

After Zhejiang TV Station broad-



"I need not only their money, but also their compassion."

— Ruan Weidan

"What they've thought is more important than what they have done. Life is invaluable. People should respect it, not only for themselves but also for others."

cast her story, others contributed. Ruan had the surgery to cut her right leg on December 31 last year. But she still needed 100,000 yuan for chemotherapy and installing an artificial limb.

Ruan and A Le came to Beijing in January to try to get further treatment. Beijinger Zhao Bingying let them stay in her home. A delegation from the National People's Congress contributed 50,000 yuan to Ruan on March 11. Shanghai Charity Foundation agreed to manage all the contributions to Ruan.

The stories have evoked popular condemnation of Ruan's parents and praise for Yang's parents. Holy statements are easy to make. But in real life, few families face such deadly serious decisions. What would you really do?

Opinions follow:

Views from Inside: Yang Ruiyin

When I lay on the operating table a third time, I repeated the same phrase to the doctor: "Please cut off the skin from

anywhere you think useful for grafting" until finally he nodded agreement.

After the surgery, my son told me the doctor spent half an hour cutting the skin off my body. I asked him "How do you know?" He told me "I stared at the clock on the wall in the operating room the whole time. I counted every single second".

Some paper said I'm a great father. In fact, any parent would do this. I can't stand back with so many people active in trying to save my son's life.

Ruan Weidan

I don't want my parents to go broke for me. But I have this disease. I need not only their money, but also their compassion.

Ruan's mother

There is no problem between my daughter and us as long as she's doing OK. We didn't give this disease to her. It's impossible to cure in the countryside where we come from. I know someone who died finally after spending 300,000 yuan.



"Any parent would do this." — Yang Ruiyin

Photo by Ding Feng

Views from Outside: Zhao Bingying

Some are very angry with Ruan's parents' decision to abandon her. They should be blamed by the court of morality as there aren't any corresponding statutes in national law.

But I think people should give this family space. It will take time to stir the parents' conscience. They must feel embarrassed by so many people trying to save their daughter's life.

Terhi Rautavaara

I'm from Finland. Finland has very good social security. Ordinary people needn't pay the bills for treatment. Instead, the government pays.

The two stories involve the relationship between people. I think this kind of thing happens every day, although it's good to see people help each other.

I can't say what my reaction would be if the same thing happened to myself. But I think I would like to do something for the ones I love. The question is one of degree. What you give to them is not just the money but also the real care.

Yan Tong, official, pregnant for seven months

I think Ruan's parents' behavior is plain wrong. They shouldn't abandon their daughter. Maybe their ability to pay is limited and they can't get enough money for the operation. But at least they should stand beside the poor girl and show their support for her in some way. Whatever they do, they shouldn't give up on trying to save Ruan's life.

What they've thought is more important than what they have done. Life is invaluable. People should respect it, not only for themselves but also for others. I disagree with abandonment. Even if there is just a small hope, people should try to seek it out and treasure life.

I feel what Yang Ruiyin did is the natural way to go. The only difference is such an accident rarely occurs in our daily life. Such spirit deserves to be promoted.

Martin Brandes, playwright from Germany

Normally I think parents would like to do everything they could for their kids. It's very touching to hear the story about Yang Ruiyin.

In my opinion, I think it's very hard to judge other people's behavior. I think everybody has to make her or his own decision under some special condition. And others have to respect it.

For both of the stories, the parents have financial problems. The health system should be responsible in part for the case. The health authorities and other administration should think what they can do to help.

The two stories are impressive cases for many people. And maybe other people have their own problems in daily life. It's a good idea for the media to report these stories not only from the point of view of parental duty, but also by asking wider questions of society.

In Germany, the social security system is officially independent from the government. Everybody has an insurance number. The insurance company takes a percentage from people's wages every month. If someone is unemployed or gets some disease, the company pays his or her living expenses for a couple of months or pays the bill for basic treatment. But it also has limits. For instance, if someone needs to get treatment in the USA, money will be a problem.

Li Fen, electronic technician

Parents exhibit different thoughts and behavior in the two stories. I feel it's only natural. I'm not surprised by what happened. Today, there is no absolute right or wrong, good or bad, agreement or disagreement. Most parents, especially mothers, would like to do everything for their child. Certainly some parents won't.

Sometimes, many problems, like what happened in these two stories, can be solved through media participation. But those are the exceptions rather than the rule.

SOUND BITES

"It's very distressing. The government reduced the number of polling stations, they took people off the voters' roll, and I think the intimidation had an effect. About three or four voting stations had incredibly high Zanu-PF returns that we didn't see in the parliamentary elections. I think that was the result of intimidation."

— David Coltart, shadow cabinet member of Morgan Tsvangirai, winner Robert Mugabe's main rival in Zimbabwe's presidential elections

"That's the key. Andrea Yates knew right from wrong, and she made a choice on June 20 to kill her children deliberately and with deception."

— Prosecutor Kaylynn Wil-liford after Andrea Yates, 37-year-old housewife, convicted of murder Tuesday by a Texas jury that rejected her plea of insanity inside four hours

"We looked at the application. That's what it is. It's an application for a boxing licence — nothing more, nothing less. It would be frivolous for us to stand up here and not be concerned about Mr. Tyson's past ... We did that, we took those things into account and made the decision we made."

— Michael Brown, vice chairman of the District of Columbia Boxing and Wrestling Commission, talks about Mike Tyson receiving the licence to fight in Washington

"No one believes that Saddam is producing candies in his caves. Baghdad must understand that it has to allow the arms inspectors to return to work."

— Chris Patten, the external affairs commissioner of EU

"The greatest tragedy of malnutrition is that it prevents children from reaching their full potential."

— former James Bond actor Roger Moore, UNICEF goodwill ambassador

"My whole adult lifetime there have been problems between Israel and the Arabs and Palestinians in that region. It is something that has gone on decade after decade after decade. In the intervening period we've had a number of wars, and I don't know that that is the determinant."

— Donald Rumsfeld, US Defense Secretary, answers the question whether Middle East strife might affect plans for phase two of the war on terrorism

By Chen Ying

Your Voice

You've read the article. What do you think? Contact us: yingchen@ynet.com

Next week: A young American man, an English teacher in Shenzhen, harassed a 30-year-old Chinese woman on a bus. More than 60 passengers witnessed the scene.

Furious Chinese on the spot called 110 as the man wanted to leave without apologizing. Then he was taken to the local police station. Later accompanied by his lawyer, he was made to apologize to the woman. But the woman felt his apology insincere. She refused to accept it and made a decision to sue him.

The man's lawyer said this is about morality and reports exaggerate the man's behavior. What do you think?

Family Cars, Foreign Cars

By Su Wei

Chinese people are predicting a heat wave in the car market in the wake of China's WTO accession and the consequent fall in tariffs on imported products.

China Economic Monitoring Center has conducted a survey among Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou residents to gauge how many people see cars as an item for family consumption and what make of cars they prefer.

Tariffs and taxes key to further price reductions

86% of those surveyed say they are very interested in car prices and how much prices for cars will fall compared with 14% who care more about fluctuations in prices of other luxury goods.

This may largely be because prices for luxury goods such as televisions, computers and mobile phones have already declined sharply, making them affordable to a great many people.

Car prices however remain relatively high, so owning a car is still a distant dream for the majority.

In compliance with agreements made on joining the WTO, China will reduce tariffs on imported cars to 25% by 2006 from the current 80%. These tariffs are a key factor in the high price of imported cars, and their reduction will make imported cars affordable for many more people.

Meanwhile, domestic car manufacturers are competing to lower their prices in order to maintain their market share in the face of the challenge brought by the imported ones.

Take Palio, manufactured by Nanjing Fiat Auto Company as an example. With its price decreasing to 84,000 yuan at the end of January, demand has kept rising and over 2,500 were sold throughout China within one month.

Meanwhile, the government has highlighted taxation reform as a means

of encouraging the purchase of cars.

Currently tax on new cars mainly includes the 17% value added tax, 5-8% consumption tax, purchasing tax of 10% and others adding up to about 15%.

Cars offer convenience and increased status

The survey shows 71% of people buy cars to bring more convenience to their life. Only 29% say the reason for them to buy a car is that they have sufficient savings and consider current prices reasonable.

Owning a car eliminates the inconvenience and waste of time spent taking crowded buses. Meanwhile, people can arrange their schedules to avoid wasting time traveling during peak hour.

Wang Jue, a civil servant says she is tired of spending nearly half an hour waiting in the bus during peak hour and worrying about there being no buses after 9 p.m. from her office when she works overtime. "I have a car, but I am paying for time-saving and convenience!"

There is also a perception that owning a car signifies a rise in social status, as many equate owning a house and car with belonging to the middle-class.

Young people especially regard having a car is a kind of worldly enjoyment and something they can show off in front of their friends.

Yang Jian, a bank

The number of registered privately owned cars accounts for about half the total motor vehicles in Beijing, or about 0.85 million. 12% of families in Beijing now have their own car.

worker is excited about driving his car with his friends during his spare time to any place they like. "Just imagine driving your own car down the highway. How wonderful it is!"

Optimum price breaks the 100,000 yuan barrier

49% of the surveyed say they are most interested in cars priced between 100,000 and 200,000 yuan, compared with only 19% who preferred this price range in 1999.

The number of people choosing cars with a price less than 100,000 yuan has also decreased by 46% to 33% this year.

Meanwhile, over 11% turned their attention to cars priced above 200,000 yuan compared only 2% in 1999.

It reveals that people are more willing to spend more money on cars, which may be due to the continuing improvement in living standards.

City dwellers have seen their disposable income increase by 8.5% to an average of 6,680 yuan in the past year.

Furthermore, people, especially young people, consider leading a comfortable life their due, if they are capable of earning money.

Meanwhile, the WTO entry has provided more opportunities to know more about the world car market.

The advanced techniques adopted in imported cars and the beautiful designs are also fac-

tors in Chinese people's aspirations to own a high priced car.

Government efforts to encourage consumption have also helped speed economic development.

With lower interest rates on loans, more people are considering loaning more to buy high priced cars.

The 0.49 million yuan price tag for an Audi will be reduced by over 7,000 yuan after the latest fall in interest rates under a three-year repayment schedule.

Procedures for buying cars with loans are also being simplified. Overseas non-banking institutions are now allowed to involve in car-purchase financing.

The quotas for imported cars in 2002 are also to be released by the end of this month.

Domestic cars less attractive, but doubles remain over imported models

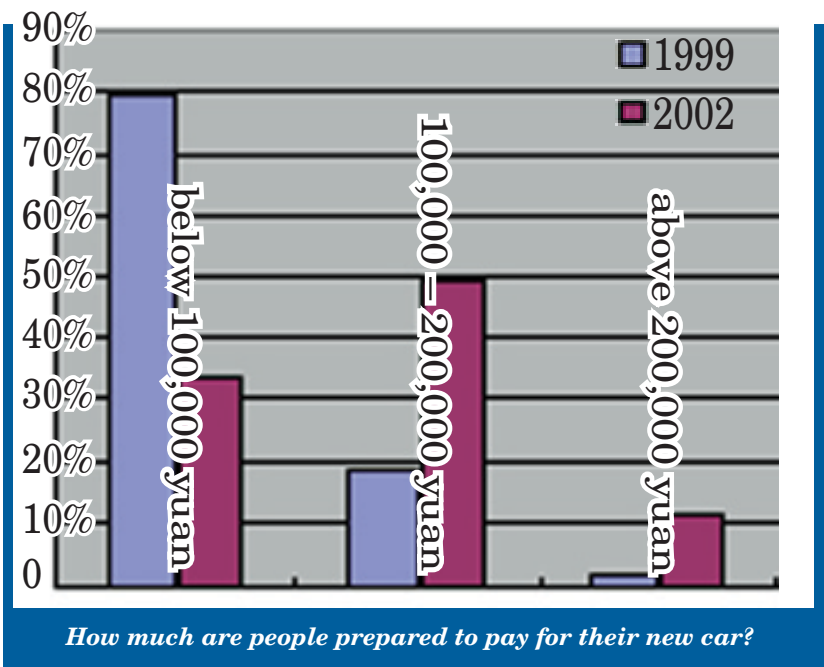
Nearly 43% of the surveyed say they will definitely buy a foreign car, followed by 42% favoring joint venture made cars. Fewer than 15% say they plan to purchase a domestically made car.

It suggests that the domestic cars have lost their once dominant market position, even though prices have continually been decreasing.

Domestic car manufacturers may be seen to have been concentrating on lowering prices at the cost of compromising on quality and safety.

Foreign cars are widely regarded as being superior in quality and more fuel efficient, as well as safer and more elegantly designed.

On the other hand, concerns about difficulties in getting compensation when problems arise with imported cars and availability of replacement parts are also a factor in people's decisions.



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Trans-Sahara Trek

100 days with a camel caravan

By Ivy Zhang

One month after his Trans Sahara Desert Trek, it's hard to find any traces on John Hare's face left from traveling in the desert for 100 days.

Hare, founder of the Wild Camel Protection Foundation and leader of the Sahara expedition team, was in Beijing last weekend en route to Xinjiang to continue his work on the wild camel program. Sitting in the lobby of the Huadu Hotel, he ordered a glass of orange juice and began to describe his adventures in the Sahara.

"There are only maybe 650 wild camels in China and 350 wild camels in Mongolia. It's more endangered than the giant panda. The most important goal of our journey was to attract international attention to the plight of wild camels in China," says Hare.

He has long had the dream of crossing the Sahara with camels, something that has not been done by a westerner since 1906, when Hanns Vischer made the journey from Tripoli in Libya to Kukawa in northern Nigeria. "So I thought I would try the journey 100 years later, in reverse."

Funded by National Geographic Magazine, the four-man expedition started out on October 24 last year. The 2,300-kilometer journey across Nigeria, Niger and Libya, took the team three and a half months to complete.

Led by the 65-year-old Hare, the other expedition members were Yuan Guoying, 62, the first Chinese to cross the Sahara; Jasper Evans, 77, from Kenya; and Johnny Paterson, 36, from Britain. They also hired several local guides and camel handlers.

First Chinese to cross Sahara

Professor Yuan Guoying from Xinjiang Scientific Research Institute of Environmental Protection, is the first Chinese on record to cross the Sahara Desert.

The good relationship between China and the three African countries the team traveled through was a big help when they were passing through checkpoints. Hare often introduced Yuan as a VIP, saying, "He's a very important man from the government of China. He doesn't speak English, but he's very important."

Yuan took a set of acupuncture needles and Chinese medicine on the expedition. In one place, he treated a Tuareg tribesman's backache with the "silver needles".

Yuan told Beijing Today that the thing he missed most was the Chinese language. He didn't speak Chinese for four months after



Yuan Guoying (left), the first Chinese to cross the Sahara, takes a break with locals

leaving China on July 16.

"When I was received at the Embassy of China in Libya at the end of the expedition, I was excited to have a good talk with the ambassador and his wife," says Yuan.

Food for camels is a problem

The team met many challenges along the way. It took six months to get permission from the Libyan government. The food they ate everyday was basic - rice or spaghetti and occasionally a little bit goat.

"The biggest problem for me was the cold," Hare says, "At night it's very cold in the desert, minus 5 or 6 degrees Celsius."

Hare expected the biggest problem they would face would be water. But it was neither water nor food, at least, not food for the human team members. It was food for the camels.

For 19 days in Libya, there was no grass for the camels to graze on. Eventually, their stores were exhausted and they had nothing to feed the camels. During that period, Hare saw over 1,000 dead camels lying by the side of the road.

"I was very concerned," says Hare. "If they don't eat, the breath of the camels is terrible because they grounded on their empty stomach."

The team pressed on and finally came to a place where an earlier caravan had left some grass behind. They scrambled together what they could with their hands, making a small pile to feed the camels. The next day at another campsite they repeated the process.

Man's second best friend

There were 25 camels in the caravan. Three of them died, one of hunger.

"In addition to the grass we found during the 19 days of food shortage, we also found maize," says Hare, "One of the camels ate it too abruptly and it was too sharp. He died quickly and sadly."

The other two died when the team were crossing Hamada al Homra, the Red Desert in northern Libya, 180 miles long and 350 miles wide. The journey was over rocky desert and sand dunes. Camels don't like walking on stones. Their feet became cracked. One of the camels died of exhaustion, even though Hare made a boot to protect its injured foot from a truck tire they found on a dune.

Hare had one special camel. He called him Pasha and fed him dates. When riding him, Hare would say "Hey, Pasha!" and the camel would turn his head around to take a date.

Jasper, the eldest of the four, couldn't speak the African language Hausa, which made it difficult to tell the person in front that he wanted to get off his camel to go to the toilet.

In Hausa, "fitshari" means to urinate. Jasper named his camel "Fitzharry" in English to remember this particular word. Whenever he shouted "Fitzharry", the name of his camel, the man in front would know that he wanted to get off the camel.

"Camels are wonderful creatures," Hare says, "They are wonderfully designed to travel in very hard conditions. Some of our camels went for 12 days without water and went on very little food. When there is a sand wind blowing, a camel can make himself cry and close his nostrils. They were also very willing and never complain about carrying heavy loads every day."

A fruitful trip

During the expedition, the team collected a total of 180 specimens of stoneware, rocks, sand, animal remains and plant samples, as well as shooting more than 20 hours of videotape and 80 rolls of film.

One of the big achievements was the ancient rock art, the pictures carved on the rock, in the Sahara desert. In a place called Yat in Niger, rocks Vischer described during his journey 100 years ago were covered in graffiti. The team discovered new rock art with many pictures of giraffes, humans and cattle. They also found many ancient spear and arrowheads.

Another discovery was the worsening of desertification. Lake Chad is a large lake in north-east Nigeria. They found that a place where Vischer mentions he drunk water from the lake 100 years ago was nearly 18 miles away from its present shore, an indication of the drying up of the desert.

Hare says they passed many sand dunes in places where they knew there had been no dunes a hundred years ago. They found places where Vischer had met people that were today uninhabited.

"I don't think it's a result of global warming. I think the desert is naturally (formed) because of the climate changes in the world, although man helps (the process) by overgrazing."



Photo by Chen Shuyi

Migrant women mark Women's Day

By Chen Ying

Beijing's population of migrant women, women workers who come from other provinces in search of employment, often need help in settling and getting themselves oriented in the metropolis.

Migrant Women's Home, a non-governmental organization that provides assistance to such women, held a special activity to commemorate International Women Day (March 8) last Sunday.

Titled "migrant women tell migrant women", Zhu Daomei, Wang Haiying and Ma Xiaoduo, who came to Beijing more than ten years ago, imparted their experiences in the city to newcomers.

It was more like a story telling session than a meeting. Participants gathered at the organization's office, a traditional courtyard residence near the Lama Temple (雍和宫), to hear each other's stories of struggling to survive in Beijing. About thirty members of the organization participated in the activity.

A graduate of middle school, Wang Haiying came to Beijing from Sichuan in 1991.

At the beginning, her wish was simply to earn enough money to allow her to run a poultry farm in her hometown. But she changed her mind when she found that more and more rural people were flocking to big cities. She started to study computers and English.

Now she works for a family from Taiwan. Although she is paid well, she also has to pay more attention to her job.

"I encourage myself to persist in order to get more experience. I've found my own position," Wang says she wants to work for a foreign family in the future, "More and more foreigners are coming to China, to Beijing. They also need domestic help."

Ma Xiaoduo is the eldest of the speakers. She came to Beijing from Jiangsu Province in early 1983. Hoping to be an English teacher in a high school in her hometown, Ma obtained her English diploma in 1988.

But she found those positions had all been occupied in her hometown by teachers who had graduated from professional colleges. She then found a job as a cleaner in a publishing company, where she met her husband to be, an editor.

Because of objections to their relationship by her boyfriend's family, she went to Shenzhen at the beginning of 1991, with just 600 yuan in her pocket, to seek work. After two years of struggle there, she was finally granted registered permanent residence in Shenzhen. She married in 1992 and returned to Beijing in 1995 in order to give birth to her child. Now she works for a Sino-British joint venture company.

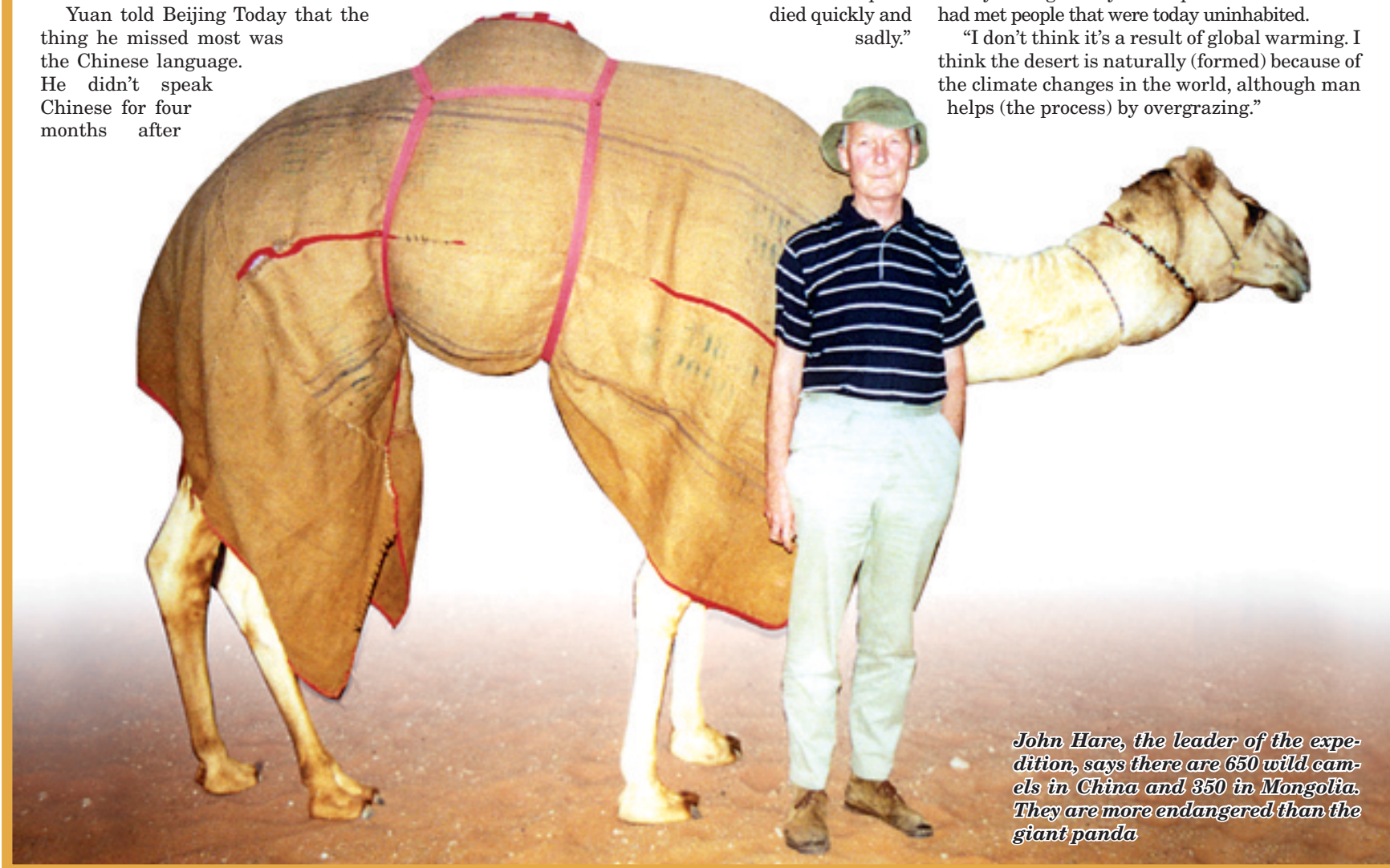
Founded by the magazine "Rural Women Knowing All" in April 1996, Migrant Women's Home is the first organization in China to cater to the needs of migrant women. It is now an activity center for migrant workers.

All three of the women who gave talks have a close relationship with Migrant Women's Home. Ma worked in the organization for two years from 1999 to 2001. Their experiences really touched others in the audience.

Zhao Lili is a Beijinger who often participates in the organization's activities. She says, "I knew of the organization through one of my migrant friends. It's really useful to those migrant workers in Beijing. I want to help them in some way. That's why I'm here."

Many activities have been planned for the next few months, including a foundation ceremony for the Rights Protection Group in April, and a physical examination for members in June.

There are currently five hundred members in the organization, however there are more than 2 million migrant workers in Beijing. Most of them are employed in occupations most local people are not prepared to take on: construction work, service, textiles, sanitation and gardening.



John Hare, the leader of the expedition, says there are 650 wild camels in China and 350 in Mongolia. They are more endangered than the giant panda



Oil painting and embroidery, two distinct art forms rooted in western and eastern culture respectively, are woven together by artist Shen Delong.

Selecting thread is the first step
Photos by Zhang Yujun



Embroidery self-portrait, 1990

Cross-stitch Cross-over

A painter swaps his brushes and paint for a needle and thread

By Zhao Pu

An elderly foreign couple stop by the window of a small shop in the underground mall at China World Trade Center to look at the *Mona Lisa* hanging inside. Walking into the shop and approaching the 'painting', one exclaims, "Oh, it's an embroidery!"

The small shop, bearing the name Gu Wu Xiu Huang (古吴绣皇), comes to Beijing from Suzhou, the home of embroidery, in South China's Jiangsu Province. Tucked away among the many fashion boutiques, this shop catches the eye of many passers by with its display of embroidery imitating oil painting masterpieces.

The owner of the shop, 38-year-old Shen Delong, is a third-generation heir to the 'random stitch embroidery' tech-



Shen in his embroidery shop at China World Trade Center

nique, invented in 1930 by Yang Shouyu. "I combine Chinese embroidery with canvas art, going beyond the ordinary and traditional path," he says.

Shen majored in oil painting at the China Academy of Fine Arts in Hangzhou. A fortuitous chance guided him to the world of embroidery after graduation. His background in the canvas art is a great advantage in his creation of embroidery, and has helped him achieve a distinctive place in China's embroidery world, an industry traditionally occupied by women.

A teacher who changed my life

"An artistic sensitivity is hereditary in my family," says Shen, recalling that his grandfather was accomplished in silk craftwork and his father talented at drawing, "and I inherited their talents."

Born into a peasant family in the outskirts of Suzhou, Shen was the youngest among five children. "My father died when I was eight, then suddenly, all of my elder brothers and sisters had to drop out of school." Shen was the only child in the family who was able to complete his schooling.

As a boy without father, he was looked down on by other kids at school. "My childhood was gray and silent, I never felt confident," he says. Teachers disliked him for his poor performance in class. One teacher even nicknamed him 'Silly Long'. "The only thing I was interested in was drawing, which was a comfort to me."

Shen has had three teachers who helped and encouraged him considerably. Cao Wenguang was the first, who taught him math and drawing in grade five of elementary school. In his first drawing lesson, students were asked to draw an object of their own choosing. Shen drew a portrait of Wang Anshi, a historical figure of the Song Dynasty. At the beginning of Cao's second lesson, he told the class, "There is one student very special in this class." When everyone looked at the monitor, the teacher continued, "It's Shen Delong." The class burst into disdainful laughter, presuming that the teacher was making a joke. "Don't laugh, I'm serious," said the teacher. He took out Shen's portrait and showed it around the class. "Look, who of you can do draw as well as he does? How can you call him 'Silly Long?'"

The warm encouragement turned out to be a turning point in the young boy's life. "I found my self-confidence at that moment, and then, it changed me into a different person," says Shen. He was inspired to study hard from then on, especially in Cao's classes. He found that as long as he listened to the teachers, he could do well, even better than the other students. "I seemed to be smarter than others," he says with a smile.

Taking up the journey of art

After graduating from high school in 1982, Shen went back to his hometown and worked in a cinema for several years. "Though my family discouraged me from drawing, a useless and improper waste of time in their eyes, I never rested my pencil." When he learned that one of his cousins was enrolled in college, his longing for further education was ignited. "I wished to receive a formal education and training in art."

During his preparation for the university entrance exam, Shen met the second teacher to help him along the road to becoming an artist. "I met Chen Zhihua at a training class I attended." Shen remembers that the fast and great progress he made deeply impressed the teacher. "He gave me lessons alone at his home and convinced me that I would pass the exam and realize my dreams."

When it came to applying for a college, he considered the China Academy of Fine Arts (CAFA), the best art school in southern China. But when he told his idea to Chen, the teacher dissuaded him, saying, "that school is not for you. Even if you qualify in the exam, you still need a big slice of luck to be one of those selected." Many of the students at that school were already established artists before they went there to study. "He said I can't get into that school," says Shen, "and recommended two other art schools, which were much easier to apply for."

Shen passed the exams for those two art schools. When he was waiting for an offer, one of his classmates asked him to



Oil painting self-portrait, 1993



Embroidery Mona Lisa, 1997

go together to apply for the CAFA. Shen was persuaded and went to Hangzhou for the exam, hiding the fact from his teacher.

When he entered the examination room, he was shocked by the appearances of other examinees. "Most of the people sitting for the exam were either bold or wearing long hair, looking like typical artists." Shen felt embarrassed about his 'country bumpkin' appearance, but the length of an applicant's hair was not a factor in assessing their artistic talent. Shen succeeded in the exam and was admitted to the school as an oil painting major in 1986, much to the surprise of his teacher, Chen Zhihua.

Unconventional student of embroidery

In his four years at CAFA, Shen made great progress and became one of the top students in his faculty. A chance occurrence on graduation led Shen into the world of embroidery.

He was employed by the Suzhou Embroidery Research Institute as a designer. "It was a routine that every new designer was sent to learn embroidery for two months before starting work," Shen never dreamed that he would take up an embroidery needle, a craft practiced by virtually every young girl in his hometown, or finish a 'painting' with threads of different colors instead of paint.

The experience of learning embroidery was painful for him. "Imagine, a man, taking a tiny needle in his hand. My fingers was so clumsy and numb holding the needle, and the needle frequently pricked my fingers." He didn't follow all the traditional embroidery techniques he was taught. With his background in canvas art, he combined his sense of oil painting with the creation of embroidery. "I take the needle as a paintbrush, and the threads as paint, and set every stitch in accordance with the theory of oil painting."

The unconventional student provoked many conservative artisans at the institute. He was accused of breaking the basic rules of embroidery. But when he finished his first piece, a self-portrait, the whole institute was astonished at the splendid production. "Everyone came to look at my first embroidery work," recalls Shen.

The third teacher to influence Shen was Ren Huixian, a renowned embroidery artist and the second-generation heir to the 'random stitch embroidery' technique, which allows embroiderers to arrange stitches randomly, rather than sequentially. Ren encouraged Shen in his unconventional approach and guided him in practicing 'random stitch embroidery'.

Some of his embroideries are still exhibited in the Suzhou Embroidery Research Institute today, though he left in 1992. For the last 12 years, Shen has been dedicated to the creation of 'oil painting embroidery.' He established his own studio in 1995 and has been teaching students his techniques of embroidery, as well as oil painting.

Some of Shen's classmates from art school have become well known artists in China.

When asked whether he regretted turning to embroidery from canvas art, he said "Yes, sometimes. Painting has been a childhood dream for me." But he loves embroidery as much as painting, and will continue to pursue this art form.



Dongcheng School puppet set collected by Liu Jilin

By Miao Yajie

For most people, shadow puppets are among those typical collectables found in antique stores and markets. Everyone has seen those painted leather figures, but few have actually seen a shadow puppet play, a traditional folk art with a history that can be traced back over two thousand years. For veteran shadow puppeteer Liu Jilin, this is the heartbreaking reality. Involved in the art since 1956, Liu learned over 20 operas by oral instruction, around four times more than most performers at the Beijing Shadow Puppet Troupe. "But no one wants to learn these operas under my instruction," says Liu.

Ups and downs of the shadow puppet show

The shadow puppet show is often described as the original ancestor of film. Records of the art form in China can be traced back to 200 BC; however shadow puppet shows employing the kind of leather puppets in use today originated around the sixth century, and reached the peak of popularity during the tenth century in the then capital, Bianliang (now Kaifeng, Henan Province).

The folk art later spread to all parts of China, and performances picked up local flavors, in the design of the figures, and in the operas the performers adapted.

Shadow puppet shows in Beijing fell into two schools: Xicheng and Dongcheng.

The Dongcheng School, which focused on Buddhist stories, disappeared from the capital's stage in the late 19th century. Meanwhile the Xicheng School absorbed elements from Beijing opera, Kunqu Opera and other local operas to form its own style.

During the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), there were over ten shadow puppet troupes of the Xicheng School performing in Beijing. After the founding of the Republic of China in 1911, the number of troupes began to decline.

Can Beijing's Shadow Puppet Shows Survive?

By the 1930's, only three troupes still survived, and by the 1950's only one remained. However Liu Jilin still experienced something of a honeymoon after he joined the De Shun Shadow Puppet Troupe in 1956.

"We had lots of performances all year round," recalls Liu Jilin, "The audiences liked us."

The 11-member troupe performed newly composed operas depicting contemporary life, and made bold designs for their puppets. Once they performed in Beihai Park, right behind the Nine-Dragon Screen, "Over 2,000 spectators were attracted by our performance."



Shadow puppet "clothes rack" made in the 19th century, collected by Waseda University, Japan

Crisis begins twenty years ago

The predicament facing shadow puppet troupes is widespread among traditional folk art forms, however, Liu puts the blame on the policies troupe leaders made when they resumed performing in 1979 after the Cultural Revolution(1966-1976).

Rather than training young performers, the troupe concentrated on designing and selling sets of puppets. About ten young people were recruited into the troupe, but some gave up because they were not interested in the art, and others seemed not to have the gift to be in the business. The crisis of a shortage of good performers and apprentices

worsened from that time.

Liu retired in 1992. He suffered a stroke in that year which resulted in partial paralysis. Nowadays he can only hold his beloved puppets in his left hand, but his passion for the art remains as strong as ever.

"I want all the operas I know to be passed on," said Liu, "I asked performers from the troupe to come to my house, but nobody comes. I offered to write and direct new operas for the troupe for free, yet still no one came to me."

The 66-year-old Liu says he never expected shadow puppet shows would decline to such an extent in just a short forty years. If the performers could only play the shadow puppets dumbly, if no one wants to learn the old operas, and no one wants to create new ones, the future of the traditional art form looks grim.

Lack of capital is the crucial issue

The Beijing Shadow Puppet Troupe now has 16 members. Every Saturday and Sunday afternoon they perform at the 100-seat Beijing Puppet Theatre for about 45 minutes. The operas change every two months.

According to deputy director of the troupe, Li Hong, "Parents bring their kids to the shows, the box office rate is about 60 to 70 %. The kids love our performances."

"Our problem is we don't have money to run our troupe in the market economy," said Li Hong. Because of the lack of capital, the troupe can't recruit young people to learn the traditional operas from the masters. Except for two apprentices in their twenties, the youngest performer in the troupe is 40 years old. And to rehearse new operas also requires money. "We can't forfeit the shadow puppet play in our hands, we know," said Li, "But we even don't have a fixed office, it's a great pity that we are not able to promote our troupe more effectively."



Photos provided by Liu Jilin

How shadow puppets are made

The first shadow puppets were made of paper. Later sheepskin was used instead of paper; however, sheepskin puppets were still not durable enough. The raw material was replaced by donkey, horse, or ox leather.

When a good piece of leather is chosen, the first step is to immerse it in water for three to five days to soften it. Secondly, it is strung tightly to a wooden frame, the hair on one side and the flesh on the other is scraped away till only a transparent layer remains.

This is delicately carved into figures and settings for the shadow play. The figure is placed between two hot bricks for just one second to dry, if ox leather is used. The final step is to paint the puppet with the finest pigments, to ensure the brightness and durability of the color.

It usually takes about ten days from designing to finishing a fretwork style puppet of the type seen in Beijing shadow puppet shows. A properly made puppet can be preserved for one or two hundred years.



Liu holding a puppet designed and made by himself

Photo by Zhuang Jian

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Red Gate Gallery

Local Galleries Waiting For the Boom

By Shi Xinyu/Zhao Pu

Chinese art galleries now face three major headaches: lack of profit, lack of sponsorship and lack of acceptance of contemporary art by the general public. Both local and non-locally invested galleries are endeavoring to secure a bigger share of the cake, as the standard of living rises and people become more art-oriented.

Profit not first priority

Till now, only a handful of galleries run by foreign investors, such as Red Gate Gallery, run by Brian Wallace from Australia, and the Courtyard Gallery, run by Handel Lee from America, can use the income from selling works exhibited in their galleries to cover their expenses. And most local galleries are still a long way from making ends meet from the sale of paintings and sculptures, let alone making a profit. The gap between input and outcome varies from 10 thousand yuan to 100 thousand yuan per month.

"Whether I can make a profit or not is not my greatest concern," says Zhang Siyong, owner and art director of Beijing New Millennium Art Gallery, which focuses on exhibiting original and creative art works by lesser-known artists. "What I care most about is whether the works in my gallery are the best I can find." This is a fairly representative attitude among local gallery owners.

"It is impossible to make a profit now," Zhang admits. He says he needs to invest about 100 thousand yuan into the gallery every month to cover the rent and other daily expenses, while among the few deals the gallery has made, the largest income is the commission from a deal worth 5 thousand US dollars. But being a professional contracted painter as well, Zhang has a regular income, which enables him to afford the gallery. Most other local gallery owners also have another profitable business that guarantees the capital the galleries need.

Is sponsorship the answer?

"We still hope for some form of noncommercial investment to help us," says Jiao Yingqi, of Beijing Artists Storehouse, a gallery that aims to promote various experimental arts. "But any investment should not influence the individuality of the gallery. And since my gallery also acts as a promoter of contemporary art for the whole society, I think there should be some sort of governmental foundation to

help support us."

Many local art dealers share this view. However as yet, no noncommercial fund has ever invested in the industry.

On the other hand, most non-local art dealers maintain that art galleries should be self-supporting. "A gallery is different from a museum," says Sun Peishao, manager of Soka Art Center, the Beijing branch of a leading Taipei based gallery. "It is a free stage where artistic works can be traded." Carole Lauvergne of the Courtyard gallery holds the same view as Sun. "Basically it is a private business," says Lauvergne.

Contemporary art lacks recognition

What all the art dealers most want is Chinese people's common acceptance of contemporary art. That, they believe, is where the future marketing potential lies.

Presently some of the better-known galleries like Red Gate and Courtyard have a stable customer base of 20 or so, most of whom are foreigners. Some of the smaller ones might have ten or less. Local buyers have only just appeared in some of the galleries.

"The value of contemporary art works is still not well recognized by ordinary Chinese people," says Ai Weiwei, art director of China Art Archives Warehouse, "and people are seldom prepared to spend thousands of yuan or more on something they see only as a decoration."

"However things are much better now than they were five years ago. More and more Chinese are beginning to show an interest in contemporary art," says Ai, "and some well educated and wealthy people have begun to appreciate and collect it. The numbers of these customers are increasing. That is our hope and the reason we persevere."

Sun Peishao predicts that the next five to ten years will usher in a golden era for Beijing's art world. His optimism is encouraging many private gallery owners to keep going. While he is confident about the future, some other local dealers are even more optimistic. Jiao Yingqi of Beijing Artists Storehouse narrows the time scale for the boom to the next four to five years.



Courtyard Gallery



Beijing New Millennium Art Gallery



Soka Art Center (Beijing)

Photos by Zhuang Jian



Picture of Chen Tong

By Xiao Xia

The best selling *Who Moved My Cheese*, by Dr. Spencer Johnson, has sold some 20 million copies worldwide. Since publication of the Chinese edition by CITIC publishing house last September, it has come to be regarded as the guidebook for reaction to changes following China's accession to the WTO, and 1.5 to 1.6 million copies have circled around China.

At a time when virtually everybody seems to finding the fragrance of this "cheese" irresistible, a local journalist named Chen Tong has had the audacity to suggest in her just-published book, *Can I Move Your Cheese?* that the Emperor's has no clothes.

The "cheese" in Johnson's book is a metaphor for whatever it is we desire to get out of life. He argues that losing your cheese is inevitable, so don't be depressed and dwell on who moved it and why, just put on your shoes and find a new one, just like the two little mice, Sniff and Scurry in his book.

"It's illogical," says Chen, pointing out the fallacy in Johnson's assertion that by moving in a new direction, you will find new "cheese". "Basically there is a 50% chance that you will find nothing." Chen points out that today's world is not the one Christopher Columbus charted. Most of the "cheese" in the maze Johnson's characters inhabit is already labeled, so how can one ever be sure of finding a new one?

Chen also points out that the successful characters in Johnson's world always take someone else's cheese, while the loser seems fated to remain a loser. Going to find a new cheese is just a tactful way of admitting that one is a loser.

The fact that few people have mentioned this simple error of logic is a case of the Emperor's New Clothes, according to Chen. "When you stand up against it, you will be branded a loser according to the theory." Those who cannot find a new "cheese" are the ones who will be left behind,

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— Quotations on Chen Tong's cheese wall

while the ones who embrace the theory are no doubt supporters of Dr. Johnson. There is no third choice.

"Just like the *Emperor's New Clothes*, everybody insists they follow the theory, because they don't want to be branded losers," says Chen. When 20 million people in the global village are applauding the Emperor parading in his new clothes, a young woman named Chen Tong has stood up and shouted, "Hey, he's not wearing anything!"



Till now *Who Moves My Cheese* is still a hot seller in bookstores



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Performing Arts Administrators Meet in Beijing



One of the exhibition stands at the fair
Photo by Liu Ping

By Zhu Lin
Beijing played host to two important events on the international performing arts calendar recently. The International Society of Performing Arts (ISPA) Forum was held here for the first time, running concurrently with the first China Performing Arts Fair (CPAF). The two events offered arts administrators from around the world a chance to engage in dialogue with Chinese performing arts groups.

Although Chinese performing arts

have made significant inroads in the international market, there still needs to be broader communication. For most of the 63 experts from 13 countries, it was the first time to appreciate the lively Chinese arts. "I've just found Peking Opera so wonderful!" said Judith Lisi, president of Tampa Bay Performing Arts Center, Florida, during the fair, which ran from March 8 to 11. "I really hope more American people will have the chance to see it with their own eyes!"

Her husband Ernie Lisi said it was the responsibility of the ISPA to act as a bridge to link American and Chinese arts.

Commenting that there was a lot more to Chinese performing arts than Peking Opera and acrobatics, both of which are already popular abroad, Elizabeth Bradley, president of the ISPA said, "I hope the world will have the chance to know about other Chinese performing arts."

Dance Connects with Individual Soul

By Zhu Lin
By reflecting on people's inner thoughts in the social environment, 'Rear Light', a modern dance performed by Beijing Modern Dance Company asks audience to join the dance as a way to connect directly with their soul.

"I tend to think a lot about the social life when I'm working on a dance," says choreographer Li Hanzhong, "Since I think that's what people care about." The inspiration for 'Rear Light' was the movie of Pink Floyd's 'The Wall'. The dance itself embarks on a journey in which people gradually lose their ability to analyze themselves and penetrate the world.

By reflecting phrases like "Will games become

war when we grow up?" and "Peace is a state of mind", the dance appears as a dim impression and series of notions collected from daily life in society. The stage satisfies a wish to see what we might have seen in a dream.

In one section, entitled 'Dance with me', the audience was invited to dance freely with the cast. This "carnival" lasted for about five minutes, then suddenly, all the dancers lay down on the floor. Those audience members who had accepted the invitation, returned to their seats looking slightly embarrassed. Li says he just wanted them to realize that the dance had something to do with them, "The problem, the pain and the struggle the dancers try to reveal also has something to do with everyone in the audience."

For those who are familiar with modern dance, 'Rear Light' pushes them to make deeper self-discovery; for those experiencing modern dance for the first time, it is a good introduction to exploring the art form.

Photo by Cui Jun



By Liu Shaoyi

Quentin Tarantino slipped quietly into Beijing recently to prepare for the shooting of his new movie *Kill Bill*. With a reputation for cool plotlines and sharp editing, "It's cool" is Tarantino's pet phrase.

"*Kill Bill* is an exciting movie and is an exciting moment because we bring Chinese, Japanese and US film-makers together precisely for the special moment and the special movie. It's cool!" he said during an interview with Beijing Today on March 6.

The movie, Tarantino's first since 1997's *Jacky Brown*, stars Uma Thurman, who plays an assassin known as "the Bride." Shot and left for dead by her new husband and employer Bill, played by Warren Beatty, and other gang members, she wakes up from a coma five years later understandably annoyed. Her quest for revenge takes her to China, Japan, Mexico and the U.S.

Tarantino seemed quite confident about his ability to hold audiences from different parts of the world, "I understand what the Chinese audience wants, what the Japanese audience wants; this moment will make the Chinese audience laugh, this moment will make the Japanese audience laugh, this one Americans laugh, this one African people laugh."

Quentin Tarantino in Beijing

Photos by Cui Jun

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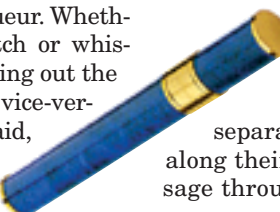
The Scent Of Success

Photos provided by Davidoff

By Lydia

What makes a fine cigar? Is it the climate or the process? Is it the aroma before being lit, the scent of the smoke, or the aftertaste? Can a fine cigar come from anywhere other than Cuba? While most lifelong cigar smokers (there are many more of those than cigarette smokers) agree that the quality of the tobacco is the overwhelming element to a fine cigar, each has a different view as to what makes a truly special smoke.

Many think that the way the ash falls from the end points to a winner. Others believe that the packaging is paramount. Still others would argue that the way the smoker feels afterwards determines a fine stogie. For most, though, the most important factor is how a cigar complements a fine liqueur. Whether brandy, cognac, scotch or whiskey, a good cigar will bring out the flavor in the drink, and vice-versa. As George Burns said, "Happiness? A good cigar, a good meal, a



good cigar and a good woman - or a bad woman - it depends on how much happiness you can handle."

Cigar Structure

There are four parts to a cigar — the filler, the binder, the wrapper and the cap.

The outside wrapper of a cigar decides its appearance. The leaves used for the wrapper should be smooth and not too oily. It also has to be soft and pliable so that it is easy for the roller to handle. The wrapper is the most expensive part of the cigar. For a cigar, 70% of flavor comes from the wrapper. The darker the wrapper, the more sugary the cigar is.

The binder leaf holds the cigar together and is usually two halves of coarse sun-grown leaf from the upper part of the plant, chosen because of its good tensile strength.

The filler is made of separate leaves folded by hand along their length, to allow a passage through which smoke can be

drawn when the cigar is lit.

The cap is a small piece of round leaf to cover the top of the cigar, the side to put into the mouth when smoking.

Accessories

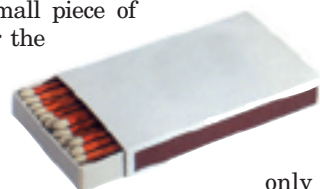
Cutter, lighter, ash-tray, carrying case, humidor.

How to Choose a Fine Cigar

Feel the cigar. Using your thumb and fore-finger to gently squeeze the cigar, working your way from tip to cap. If the cigar is spongy it hasn't had time to stabilize. Too hard a cigar means it's dried out. Quite unpleasant!

Smell the cigar. You're looking for a pleasant tobacco aroma. You'll know it when you smell it.

Look for imperfections. Search for obvious nicks or tears in the cigar. Nicks and tears can cause the cigar wrapper to unravel during the smoke. Beware the cigar wrapper that has too many veins! This will cause the cigar to burn unevenly.



Cigar Lounges

In the Kerry Center

Quintero International Cigar Lounge is the first of its kind in Beijing. The lounge stocks a wide range of cigars at a reasonable price, from Cuba, Honduras, Jamaica and nearly every other country you can think of. The lounge is what it should be; comfortable. Plush sofas, dark brown interior, excellent service and a fully stocked bar specializing in fine wines enhance the smoking experience.

You can also bring your own cigars to store in the humidor. At the Cigar Moment held each month, for members only, the owner introduces a new kind of cigar and the perfect wine to complement it. So come on over, light one up, and become lost in a smoky haze.

Add: Quintero International Cigar Lounge, 121#, 1st floor of Kerry Center (嘉里中心), 1 Guanghualu, Chaoyang District. **Open:** 11am - 2am. **Member:** 300 yuan/month. **Tel:** 85299496.

In the St. Regis

Featuring a nostalgic colonial style interior and cigars from Cuba and America, the Cigar Lounge in the St. Regis has a good atmosphere for cigar aficionados. Though small, both a wine lounge and the Astor Grill, famous for its steaks, are close by on the same floor. Many patrons go between the three rooms totting either a glass of wine or a cigar, or both. The lounge also has a special humidor room that offers storage cabinets, complete with your name engraved above, for 100 yuan per month. For the less dedicated, you can purchase single cigars from around 20 to 400 yuan.

Add: 3F, the St. Regis Hotel (国际俱乐部饭店), 21 Jianguomenwai Dajie. **Open:** 4pm-1am. **Tel:** 64606688-2637.

In the American Club

The Beijing American Club is the most prestigious membership club in Beijing today, providing a comprehensive range of facilities such as their Town Club.

Inside the club is a members only Cigar Lounge. The lounge is a smoker's delight, fully equipped with individual lockers and smoke eaters. While you admire the flora of the two landscaped patios outside, you can sit back in rich leather chairs and enjoy your favorite cigar with the sure knowledge that you are not disturbing other aficionados.

Add: Beijing American Club Town Club, 4th, 28th & 29th floor, China Resources Building (华润大厦), 8 Jianguomen North Avenue.

For membership information contact, 85192888.

By Lydia / Priscilla

Photos by Zhuang Jian, Chen Shuyi & Jiao Pei

What's your favorite shop, stand, bar or restaurant? We will be very happy to share your experience with all our readers and don't forget, a mystery gift is waiting for you if we print your story. Please contact us at 65902524. Email: shopping@ynet.com.

Beijing's cigar shops are mainly located in hotels such as Kun Lun, Great Wall, and Wangfu. Some shopping centers like SciTech and Lufthansa also have special counters for cigars, see the list below.



Quintero International Cigar Lounge (金特罗国际雪茄会馆), 1st floor of Kerry Center, 11am-2am, 85299496.



Cigar Lounge at International Club Hotel (国际俱乐部饭店雪茄吧), 3rd floor of St. Regis, 64606688 ext Cigar Lounge.



Cigar Lounge at The Beijing American Club (美国会雪茄吧), 28th floor of China Resources Building, 85192888.



Macanudo Cigar Shop Kun Lun (麦克纽杜昆仑专卖店), 1st floor of Kun Lun Hotel, 9am-11pm, 65903388 ext 5421.



Old Jin Jiang Cigar Bar (老锦江雪茄吧), 2nd floor of Kun Lun Hotel, 9:30am-12midnight, 65003388.



Davidoff Cigar Shop (大卫杜夫专卖店), 1st floor of Wangfu Hotel, 11am-9:30pm, 65128899 ext 7991. (China's first cigar shop, open in 1994)

Business Service 商务服务



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Villas Threaten to Revive for Round Two of Battle

By Liu Wenlong

Industry people nominated 2001 as the "Townhouse Year". But even in the "Townhouse Year", some wiser developers were working on secret villa operations that could conceivably carry out a successful counter-attack on the townhouse in 2002.

Fengqiao Villa, in the traditional villa belt along the Chaobaihe River in Shunyi County, sold half of its 27 apartments within two months of public release at the end of 2001. Beijing Rose Garden (third phrase), Orange Villa (second phrase) and International Embassy Area also took the lion's share of last year's villa market. Some developers forecast 2002 will belong to the villa and competition is inevitable. Various promotion strategies by villa developers suggested this was true.

Beijing Pattern

According to the present map, Beijing's villas can be divided into four categories: one mountain, two rivers, three lines and four expressways. "One mountain" indicates the area along West Hills from Mentougou via Badachu and Fragrant Hills to Yongfeng county. "Two rivers" includes the villa belt on each side of the Chaobaihe and Wenyuhe rivers. "Three lines" are Litang, Jingshun, and Jingtong main traffic routes.

"Four expressways" refers to villas by Jingchang (Beijing to Changping), Jingshen (Beijing to Shenyang), Jingkai (Beijing to Kaifeng) and Jingmi (Beijing to Miyun) expressways.

"Three lines" and "four express-



Picture by Lao Du

ways" are traditional villa regions while "one mountain" and "two rivers" boasts a better natural environment. Beijing's villa market has matured since its 1992 debut. Lee Villa (Yujing Garden), Forest Garden and others were hot items at that time. Then from 1993 to 2000, the market stagnated until sales recovered in 2000, such as Water Garden and Forest City. Villas made a comeback and reopened to leasing and purchase with newly finished apartments. Rose Garden was one of them. Rose Garden represented the newcomers on the

market.

'Low-low' Villas

The townhouse and villa success stories contain two common elements: low density and low price. The townhouse meets the demand of people at medium-income level who seek a relatively larger space and detached housing for less cash than buying a villa. Villas have changed too. Developers have abandoned the building of luxury houses and installed health, culture and quality-of-life concepts into their products. Ergonomic design and

improved international standard services are in.

A return to nature is the latest idea. Beijing villa developers stress green space and their 100 percent imported furniture. Fengqiao Villa labels itself a fourth-generation villa that "combines individualism and quality into daily life". Some attention is shifting from townhouses back to villas, suggesting villas might soon revive.

Townhouse: linked office, usually 2, 4 or 8 houses linked together.

Villa: individual building.

When is a Chair a Chair?

By Wang Dandan / Han Kun

In ancient times, there were two methods of expressing belief in Buddhism: one was to become a monk and lead the holy temple life. But a monk cannot marry, drink or eat meat.

Another method for those who choose not to become a monk was nonetheless to cultivate themselves according to Buddhist doctrine in their own homes.

That is, the other kind were more worldly people who like the idea of marrying, keeping their hair or even eating meat. This second class are known as "ju shi" (people who don't become a monk but follow the Buddha regulations), people who cultivate Buddhism doctrine at home. In the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), many families had a family hall for worshipping Buddha.

Buddhist chairs were used mostly by rich families as an item of sophisticated furniture custom made for meditation. A Buddhist learns to be at peace with the world only through perseverance and persistence.

In Buddhism, one of the most effective methods of understanding Buddha is to "can chan" (translate Chinese characters and English), which means staying in a silent place and contemplating the essence of Buddha.

Can chan (meditation)

Za Zen Buddhism commonly uses can chan. The Buddhist chair met the demand at that time.

The Buddhist chair was designed especially for people to sit crosslegged. Its back was as low as the waist, letting people sit in a standard Zen gesture, backs straight. The chair also has a longer seat compared with other chairs and its armrests are smaller. The chair was empty in the front for Buddhists to sit crosslegged.

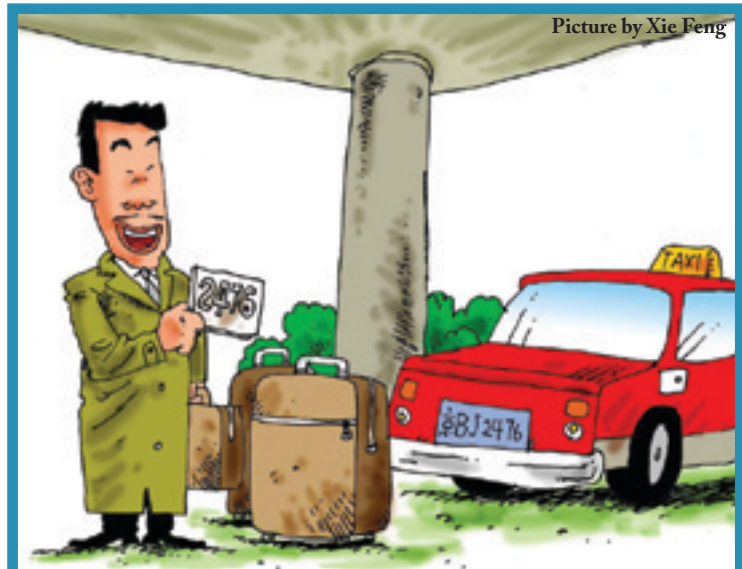
Today, however, the chair is not restricted to Buddhists. It has become a fine furniture decoration for families.



Special thanks to Guanfu Classic Art Museum (观复古典艺术博物馆)

Buddhist Chair of the Ming Dynasty

"HOUSING" welcomes your feedback: What kind of difficulties do you encounter when looking for housing in Beijing? What kind of information do you need? What can we help you with? Our e-mail: housing@ynet.com Tel:6590-2522 Fax: 6590-2525



Picture by Xie Feng

Guest Target: Poly Plaza Hotel
When: 12pm-1pm, Tuesday, Mar. 12th
Quiz Hotel Detective: Li Dan

Franco Dossena, Italy

I like the clean and nice room here plus very reasonable prices. We head into our everyday hectic schedules and when we come back here at night, it is important here makes me feel very comfortable.

Chen Jiazhao, Hong Kong

I don't want a very luxurious hotel. Here is cozy with a good price. It's also a hotel full of culture and business sense.

Ina Hamilton, Denmark

People here are very friendly. Service is rather fast

and convenient. I especially enjoy the moment drinking coffee in the lobby. Here is full of culture, for the hotel itself has a modern theater and a museum.

Rychkou Michael, Russia

Here is close to my office and very convenient. The rooms are clean and especially the bathroom is very good. One more thing I feel is nice is that the door guy will write down the taxi number for you when you get out so as once if you lose something in the taxi, you know where to find it.

Harbor Offer

By Salinda

Harbour Plaza is promoting a deluxe amenities discount room package. Starting from US\$68 for an overnight stay in a standard room, guests can enjoy: daily buffet breakfast, complimentary daily newspaper, free pressing of one suit or dress, 20% discount on laundry, pressing and dry-cleaning services, welcome fruit platter

- free local calls, 10% discount on food & beverage outlets
- For business travelers, availability of special rates starts from US\$98 for an overnight stay in a Harbour Club Superior Room. The added Benefits include:
- Complimentary daily breakfast at the Harbour Club Lounge or America.
- Buffet breakfast at the Cafe California.
- Complimentary snacks & evening cocktails at the Harbour Club Lounge.
- Extra breakfast available at US\$10 per person per day.

fast at the Harbour Club Lounge or America.

• Buffet breakfast at the Cafe California.

• Complimentary snacks & evening cocktails at the Harbour Club Lounge.

• Extra breakfast available at US\$10 per person per day.

All the above rates are applicable for single occupancy and subject to 15% service charge & social development fee of US\$1.50 per room per night. The discount room package is valid until June 30, 2002. Tel: 6436 1805/6436 2288 ext.2800. Fax 6436 1813/6437 6310. E-mail: hpbjsale@public.fhnet.cn.net or pbjresv@public.fhnet.cn.net

Ring Road Reckonings

By Liu Wenlong

The see-saw price variety of new housing in the Second and Third Ring Road reflects the perceived advantages of a more central city location.

For example, Xinshi Garden in Sanlihe is selling at a high price, about 8,000 yuan per sqm. Jiaying Tiancheng Garden hikes up its prices for its location beside top-class commercial and business facilities. Within the Second Ring Road, Wanhe Apartment, seven- and eight-story buildings with elevators have the potential of selling well because of their careful design and superior surroundings.

For housing at medium and low prices, about 3,000 yuan per sqm, Forest City grabs the eye for its position at the extension of the Zhongzhou Road and quite near the future's light subway.

Though economy apartments group Cui Garden lack public transportation and business services, they attract subscribers.

For the office building market, leasing and selling will progress in Zhongguancun.

Leasing and selling will see a bright future with the fast development of Zhongguancun.

Tsinghua Tongfang Hi-tech Square (清华同方 ③)

Location: east of Tsinghua University, Haidian District. Average price: 13,000 yuan/sqm (US\$1,570/sqm). Type: Office building. Tel: 6231 2232. Developer: Beijing Tsinghua Tongfang Real Estate Development.

China Blue Star Information Industry Tower (中国蓝星 ④)

Location: east of Tsinghua University, Haidian District. Average price: 15,000 yuan/sqm (US\$1,812/sqm). Type: Office building. Tel: 6261 4124. Developer: China National Blue Star (Group) Corporation

Pengli International Garden (鹏丽家园 ⑧)

Location: Baijiazhuang Xili, Chaoyang District. Average price: 12,500 yuan/sqm (US\$1,510/sqm). Type: foreign sale apartment. Tel: 6530 1116. Developer: Beijing Pengli Garden Real Estate Development.

Hairun International Apartment (海润国际 ⑦)

Location: Jiangtailu, Chaoyang District. Average price: 8,800 yuan/sqm (US\$1,063/sqm). Type: foreign sale apartment. Tel: 6432 7360. Developer: Beijing Kaituo Real Estate Development.

Xinshi Huayuan (新世花园 ⑤)

Location: 1A, Sanlihe, Xicheng District. Average

price: 12,288 yuan/sqm (US\$1,480/sqm). Type: economic house. Tel: 6851 8118. Developer: Xinhua Real Estate Development.

Wanhe Apartment (万和世家 ⑥)

Location: 10, You'anmennei Dajie. Average price: 7,180 yuan/sqm (US\$868/sqm). Type: economic house. Tel: 8353 6668. Developer: Wanxin Real Estate Development.

Jinrong Garden (金容苑 ⑪)

Location: 15, Puhuangyu Road, Fengtai District. Average price: 4,900 yuan/sqm (US\$592/sqm). Type: economic house. Tel: 6762 7557. Developer: Xinrongji Real Estate Development.

Jiaying Tiancheng Garden (佳境天成 ②)

Location: Zhonghuan Nanlu, Wangjing, Chaoyang District. Average price: 9,000 yuan/sqm (US\$1,087/sqm). Type: business apartment. Tel: 6474 6205. Developer: Yingda Real Estate Development.

Cuicheng Garden (翠城馨园 ⑬)

Location: Southeast of Sifang Bridge, Dongsihuan (the east fourth ring road), Chaoyang District. Average price: 3,180 yuan/sqm (US\$384/sqm). Type: economic house. Tel: 6594 5262. Developer: Beijing Zhuzong Real Estate Development.

Yiqing Garden (怡清园 ④)

Location: east of Haidian Medical School, Xiaoying, Qinghe. Average price: 4,000 yuan/sqm (US\$483/sqm). Type: economic house. Tel: 6290 3336. Developer: Beijing Jianxiong Real Estate Development.

Greenland Garden ("second phrase") (绿岛苑 ⑨)

Location: 1 Dahuangzhuang, Chaoyang District. Average price: 3,800 yuan/sqm (US\$459/sqm). Type: economic house. Tel: 6579 2546. Developer: Beijing Youlikai.

Forest City (森林大地 ①)

Location: Xisanqi, Haidian District. Average price: 3,850 yuan/sqm (US\$465/sqm). Type: economic house. Tel: 8291 5990. Developer: Beijing Tianlongyuan Real Estate Development.

Xinbao Garden (鑫宝苑 ⑫)

Location: Majiabao Donglu, Fengtai District. Average price: 4,800 yuan/sqm (US\$580/sqm). Type: economic house. Tel: 6723 8912. Developer: Beijing Xinfuhai Real Estate Development.

Special thanks to resources: Beijing Zhongyuan Property Management & Consultant Corporation, Beijing Weiye Business & Consultant Corporation, and Beijing Baichuan Investment & Consultant Corporation.



Picture by Liu Yang

To Let

1 bedroom apartment / 49 sq.m

Location: Sunshine 100, a new complex within walking distance of Kerry Center, 800 meters from China World Hotel

Description: Brand new overseas sales apt; on the 23rd floor; around-the-clock customer service; club facilities; broadband I-net; Satellite TV; new, high-quality furniture and amenities; wooden floor

Price: USD 650 per month

Required: minimum 1 year lease

Contact: Ms. Lee 1380 1336695. salinda@etang.com

Activities

Party to Wear Green

Come wearing green to this year's St. Paddy's Day party and receive a free Guinness and 15% off all drinks after that. Live music. **Where:** PJ O'reilly's Henderson Center, 18 Jianguomennei Dajie, Chaoyang District. **When:** March 17, all evening. **Admission:** Free **Tel:** 65594218.

Professional Women's Networking Luncheon

March meeting followed by a presentation and Q&A. Ms. Polly Lo, Management Consultant at Mobile ManPower Ltd, will give a presentation on managing the changes and issues facing professional women. In English. **Where:** Capital Club. **Admission:** 150 yuan. Including a western set luncheon. Make reservation by mailing to patricialai@capitalclub.com.cn. **Tel:** 84862225 ext. 261.

Learn Something about Beijing

International Newcomers' Network (INN) helps expats new to Beijing settle in and learn about the city by sharing knowledge and experiences at monthly coffee meetings. Meetings are held the last Monday of each month. This month the topic is "Planning Special Events". **Where:** 3F, Function Room, Athletic Center, 10am-noon, Capital Mansions, Athletic Centre. **When:** March 25, 10am. **Admission:** 30 yuan. **Email:** innchn@bigfoot.com. Joette Comstock.

Performance

Peking Opera

By Beijing Fenglei Peking Opera Troupe. Wen Zhao Guan, Yu Zhou Feng, Jin Chi Da Peng. **When:** March 16, 2:30pm. Performances: Shi Zi Lou, Zuo Gong, Ba Wang Bie Ji, Qiu Jiang, Xiao Shang He, Xiao Fang Niu. **Where:** Huguang Guild Hall, 3 Hufanglu, Xuanwu District. **When:** March 15-22, 7:30pm. **Admission:** 100-180 yuan, 200-380 yuan box. **Tel:** 63518284.

Hiking

The Tang Dynasty Cave Dwellings

Where: Yanqing County, northwest of Beijing.

Degree of difficulty: 1-2.

Walking time: 1-2 hours.

Route: The caves are extensive and well designed, with animal shelters at ground level. Most of the rooms are 3-4 m³. Some homes are carved high into the rocks.

Leave: 9am at the Lido outside Starbucks.

Come Back: 4pm.

Cost: 200 yuan per adult, 150 yuan per child including round trip transportation, entrance fee, morning tea, lunch and profession guide.

How to join: Huilin at 13701003694 or mail to bjhikers@yahoo.co.uk

Weather

Friday
March 15 Cloudy
Max: 12C. Min: 3C.

Saturday
March 16 Clear to cloudy
Max: 15C. Min: 1C.

Sunday
March 17 Cloudy to clear
Max: 14C. Min: 2C.

Monday
March 18 Clear to cloudy
Max: 15C. Min: 1C.

Tuesday
March 19 Clear to cloudy
Max: 17C. Min: 4C.

Wednesday
March 20 Cloudy to clear
Max: 13C. Min: 5C.

Thursday
March 21 Clear to cloudy
Max: 16C. Min: 2C.

We are glad to receive your feedback. We will print employment, language exchange and accommodation info for individuals. Feel free to email us at bjtodayinfo @ ynet.com or call 65902520. By Priscilla / Lydia

Music

Symphonic Concert

By China Philharmonic Orchestra. Conductor: Johannes Wildner. Piano Duo: Liu Hsiao-Lian, Zhou Yi. Program: Ludwig van Beethoven: Criolan Overture, Op. 62; Francis Poulenc: Concerto for Two Pianos in D minor; Gustav Mahler: Symphony No. 5 in C sharp minor. **Where:** Forbidden City Concert Hall, Zhongshan Park. **When:** March 16, 7:30pm. **Admission:** 30-220 yuan. **Tel:** 65598285.



Imperial Garden Series 2002 Season

Piano Recital by Cecile Licad. **Where:** Forbidden City Concert Hall, Zhongshan Park. **When:** March 17, 7:30pm. **Admission:** 50-180 yuan, 600 VIP. **Tel:** 65598285.



Folk Music Series

Inner Mongolian Long Tune and Horse Head Instrument Con-



cert. **Where:** Forbidden City Concert Hall, Zhongshan Park. **When:** March 22, 7:30pm. **Admission:** 30-280 yuan. **Tel:** 65598285.

One Lovely Gold Flower-Chinese Minority Famous Songs Concert

By Central Nationalities Song & Dance Troupe. **Where:** National Library Concert Hall, 33 Zhongguancun Nandajie, Haidian District. **When:** March 22, 7:30pm. **Admission:** 30-180 yuan. **Tel:** 88545348.

Music at Bars

Band Choke and Killing, Get Lucky Bar, March 15, 9pm, 64299109. Mitabe, band performance from Africa, Jam House, March 15, 9pm, 65063845. Funk, latin & jazz, Left Bank, north side of Houhai, March 15, 9pm, 66129300. Jump Party, Vics, March 16, 10pm, 65936215. Japanese punk band Notable, Get Lucky Bar, March 16, 8pm, 64299109. Band performance, Afanti, Jam House, March 16, 9pm, 65063845. Blues and pops from "Swing Fish", Dirty Nellies Irish Pub, March 15, 9pm, 65022808. Jazz band performance, Green Club, March 16, 9pm, 65906688.

Exhibitions

"0 · 4D"

0 · 4D expresses the points were positive and negative forces meet in the fourth dimension.

Where: Shangrila Culture & Art Ltd, Feijiacun, Cuigezhuangxiang, Chaoyang District. **When:** March 16-24. **Tel:** 64364785.

Zhang Cheng's Oil

The exhibition focuses on scenery in northeast China. Zhang Cheng's works all show his great passion for his hometown in Heilongjiang Province. **Where:** Qin Gallery, 38 A Fangcaodi North Street, Chaoyang District. **When:** March 16-28. **Tel:** 65074062.

Highlights of the Chengdu Biennale

Showcasing works of both China's established and emerging young artists, including Chen Ke, He Yunchang, Hong Hao, Li Jin and The Luo brothers. Opening reception: March 17, 2-5pm. **Where:** Courtyard Gallery, 95 Donghuamen Dajie. **When:** March 17-April. **Admission:** free. **Tel:** 65268882.

Schoeni Gallery Inaugural Beijing Exhibition

This famous Hong Kong gallery has recently set up it first branch in Beijing at SOHO New Town. Their first showing includes such internationally recognized Chinese artists as Yue Minjun, Liu Wei and Zhang Xiaogang. **Where:** Schoeni Gallery, 9th floor, New Town SOHO, 88 Jianguolu, Chaoyang District. **When:** March 16 to April, daily 10:30am - 7pm. **Admission:** Free. **Tel:** 13801303883.

Paintings Exhibitions

Organized by Wu Zuoren International Foundation of Fine Arts, 177 works by 138 artists, including 4 works by Wu Zuoren will be exhibited. All these works will be auctioned after the exhibition. **Where:** 1F, Modern Art Hall, China Millenium Monument. **When:** till April 2. **Tel:** 68513322.

The 1st Chengdu Biennial

267 works by 36 artists will be on shown.

Courses

Chinese Cultural Club

Chinese Traditional Medicine Lectures (2)

Typhoid and Rheumatism. **Where:** Yanhuang Guoyiguan, Qianmen Dongdajie, southeast of Tian'anmen Square. **When:** March 16, 10:30am-12pm. **Fee:** 50 yuan.

Exploring Beijing

Rediscover the Lama Temple, Confucian Temple & Imperial Examination Center. English narration provided. **Where:** Lama Temple, Yonghegong. **When:** March 16, 2-4:30pm.

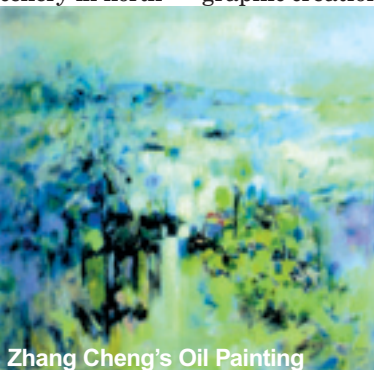
Learn to cut out Tang style costumes

Shanghai Tang Costume master tailor Li Ji-anqin will host a training class specifically for expatriates in the capital. **Where:** Beijing Peo-

This theme is caring about the local art. **Where:** 2F, Art Hall, China Millennium Monument Art Museum, A9, Fuxinglu, Haidian District. **When:** March 2 to April. **Admission:** 10 yuan (free for students every Friday afternoon). **Tel:** 68513322.

"Echoes" - Painting Exhibition

By French artist Chantal Vetter. Her graphic creations on wood, board and canvas come from her strong affiliation with the abstract form. Her painting is continuously enriched by new ethnic and cultural influences, which "echo" her themes in vibrating colors. **Where:** Cultural Office of Italian Embassy, 2 Sanlitun Dongerjie. **When:** March 19-29, Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm, 2-5pm. **Tel:** 65322187. **Email:** italcult@public.bta.net.cn



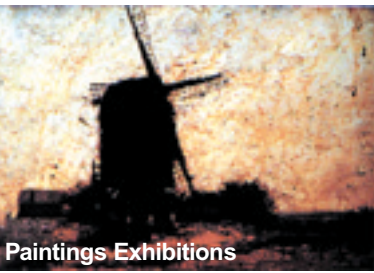
Zhang Cheng's Oil Painting



Peng Shiqiang

Exhibition by Peng Shiqiang

His works feature traditonal buildings of Beijing, such as the former residence of Lu Xun, Lao She as well as other residential buildings from other provinces. **Where:** Beijing Cultural Tea House of Longshuncheng, 64 Yongdingmenwai Dajie, inside the courtyard of Longshuncheng Chinese-style Furniture Factory. **When:** March 15-30, 10am-4pm. **Admission:** free. **Tel:** 67275863.



Paintings Exhibitions

Movies



Review of Movies by Herbert Achternbusch

Born in 1938, Achternbusch began making movies 1971. *Das Letzte Loch*, 1981, 92 minutes, *Die Olympiasiegerin*, 1983, 107 minutes, March 20, from 6:30pm. "Heilt Hitler!", 1986, 146 minutes, *Das Andechser Gefuhl*, 1974, 68 minutes, March 21, from 6:30pm. *Bierkampf*, 1976, 85 minutes, *I Know the Way to the Hofbrauhaus*, 1992, 85 minutes, March 22, 6:30pm. **Where:** Beiguo Theater, Art Building, Beijing Normal University, 19 Xijiekouwai Dajie. **When:** March 20-22, from 6:30pm.

Chinese Movie with English Subtitles

Zheng Chenggong, Directed by Wu Ziniu, starring Zhao Wenzhuo, 2000, 110 minutes. This is a dramatization based on real historical events during the Ming Dynasty. Zheng graduates with high honors in China's capital, Nanjing. He is ultimately successful on

all fronts, becoming the first person in Chinese history to bring Taiwan under the control of the mainland government. **Where:** Cherry Lane Movies, Intl. Conference Hall, Sino-Japanese Youth Exchange Center, 40 Liangmaqiaolu, 1km east of the Kempinski Hotel. **When:** March 15, 8pm. **Admission:** 50 yuan. **Tel:** 64615318



Chinese Movie: Yan Yu Hong Yan

Until March 15. China Cinema, 62254488-4299; Xindongan Cinema, 65281988; Yingxie Cinema, 64207759; Stars Cinema, 64040602; Dizhi Cinema, 66171599; Shengli Cinema, 66175091.

A Review of Spanish Female Movies - "The Different Angle of View" (La Otra Mirada)

16 Spanish films will be screened, with both English and Chinese subtitles. This is

a second screening of the same films that were shown last week. **Where:** Project Hall, Beijing Film Academy, 4 Xituchenglu, Haidian District. **When:** March 14-17. **Tel:** 65320780.



French Movie by Francois Truffaut

Jules et Jim, 1961, black & white, 100 minutes. **Where:** Space for Imagination Coffee Shop, 5 Xiwangzhuanglu, Haidian District. The Loft, 4 Gongtibeilu, Chaoyang Distict. **When:** March 16, 7pm (Coffee Shop). **Tel:** 62791280, 65065592, 65017501.



Sports

Swimming Pool

Eight-lane swimming pool, international standards, well-furnished bathing facilities. **Add:** Silver Olive Sports World, 21st Century Hotel, 40 Liangmaqiaolu, Chaoyang District. **Tel:** 64663311-3181.

Beijing Hash House Harriers - the Drinking Club with a Running Problem

Hares: Chubby & Mike & Mathais. **Venue:** Annual ides of March (St. Paddy's Day) (Toga Hash); Bus - 5th Ring Road. **When:** March 17. **Fee:** 100 yuan. **More info:** RDRhead@uop.com

Volleyball

Where: Wooden Floor Gym, International School of Beijing (ISB). **When:** Every Sunday, 5-7pm. **Email:** Beijing_volleyball@hotmail.com

Badminton

Bring your own rackets, shuttles are provided. Join in the fun and make some new friends. **Where:** ISB Gym, Holiday Inn Lido (Indoor). **When:** Every Sunday, 9:30-11:30am. **Fee:** 30 yuan per person. **Tel:** 1370 109 7537 (Tifa) or 1350 116 4234 (Suddhodan).

Job Opportunities

Beijing BISS International School needs qualified applicants.

Positions: Marketing & Admissions executive - work experience in customer service or marketing; cheerful personality and able to work independently as well as in a team; Fluent in English & Chinese **Fax:** 64433156 **Email:** job@biss.com.cn

TEFL/ESL Certificated Native English Teachers Wanted

BINE "Beijing Institute for New Economy" small classes, central location, excellent conditions. **Tel:** 65046495. **Email:**

Dining out

Sales Promotion at SciTech Hotel Fortune Court Chinese Restaurant, 2F, featuring genuine Cantonese cuisine, 11:30am-2:30pm/5:30pm-10pm.

Pastels Bistro Coffee Shop, Lobby, featuring the Seafood & Curry Delicacy Festival, Lunch Buffet/ Dinner Buffet RMB68/pax + 15% SC, 6:30am-12pm.

Airang Korean Restaurant, 1F, special Set Menu, ideal for business banquet, RMB125/pax + 15% SC; Lunch Set Menu, ideal for lunch break, RMB68/pax; Business Lunch Set Menu, ideal for small business lunch, 35 yuan/pax, 11am-2:30pm/5pm-10pm. **Where:** SciTech Hotel, 22 Jianguomenwai Dajie, Chaoyang

Rotary

Members of Rotary Clubs are a cross-section of local business and professional leaders who come together for fellowship and to build life-long friendships, promote high ethical standards in all vocations and who seek personal satisfaction in providing volunteer service to others in need of help. **Where:** Kempinski Hotel. **When:** 12:30pm, every Tuesday. **Tel:** 65906193 (Mr. Jens Dreier or Ms. Louise Zhou).

Super Football Fans?

The ClubFootball Bar, Beijing's pace-setting football, theme bar & restaurant. Big Screen. Exclusive memorabilia signed by some of the world's top players. Unique, international menu. Mar 15, Friday, Party Night, 9pm, Cheap Mix drinks plus the best Alternative in town. Mar 16, Saturday, 7:55pm, Middlesbrough vs Liverpool; 10:55pm, English Premiership match. Mar 17, Sunday, 9:55pm, Leeds vs Blackburn Rovers; 11:55pm, Aston Villa vs Arsenal. All Live & English Premiership! **Add:** 10 Taipingzhuang, near Red House Hotel, Chunxiulu, Dongzhimenwai Dajie, Chaoyang District. **Tel:** 64150988/64167786.

echo@neweco.com.cn (Echo)

A major international public affairs/public relations consultancy

It seeks talented local Chinese professionals to handle project management and client service in strategic communications. Requirements: at least three years of relevant professional experience working with multinationals, good grasp of media and communications environments, strong organizational and people skills, and high an aspiration to learn and advance. **Email:** afirdous@apcochina.com. **Tel:** 65055257.

District. **When:** March & April. **Tel:** 65123388.

Culinary Journey through the Cuisine of Korea

Come and enjoy the gastronomic delights of Korea at the Atrium Cafe. Two guest chefs from the world-renowned Seoul Hilton have assembled an exquisite selection of Korean delicacies to tempt your taste buds. The fine beer selection plus your choice of Soju is available to give this Korean Food Extravaganza the perfect finishing touch. **Where:** Beijing Hilton Hotel. **When:** April 18 to 26. **Price:** 175/180 yuan. Subject to 15% surcharge. **Tel:** 6466 2288 ext. 7406

Leisurely Getaway

Where to go,
What to do
Around the city

By Jiang Zhong

The healthy habits of emperors live on today as resourceful Beijingers take to the hills to “ta qing” (walking on green) when leaves turn green. Ming and Qing emperors all included ta qing in their annual schedule, frequenting four attractions around the city: Tianshou Mountain of Changping, Shidu at Fangshan, Chengde and Yongning Mountain of Hebei Province.

After they died, the Ming were entombed in Tianshou and the Qing in the Yongning mountains. Ta qing has two key parts: tree planting and flower admiring. Families plant trees on Chinese Arbor Day and pray for future blessing. Scenic spots often supply saplings.

Chinese tourists also admire the wild flowers and blossoms that smother hills in spring colors. The dominant flowers for March include wintersweet, winter jasmine, plum, mountain peach and apricot. Magnolia generally blossoms in April although some around Tianshanmen have already sprung.

La mei, wintersweet, represents bravery in poems and mythology. Western suburban mountains see this flower prosper in late March. The two botanical gardens at West Hills offer an ideal resort for wintersweet in the middle of March.

Botanical gardens

The two botanical gardens, run by the Chinese Academy of Science and the Beijing municipal government, are a must for serious ta qing enthusiasts.

Getting to Beijing Botanical Garden of the Institute of Botany: Bus 333 or 360 from the Summer Palace to Wo Fo Si (卧佛寺 the Temple of Sleeping Buddha), walk south. Admittance: 5 yuan Open: 8am-4pm

Getting to Beijing Botanical Gardens: Bus 333 or 360 from the Summer Palace to Wo Fo Si, walk north. Admittance: 5 yuan for the garden; 50 yuan for the palm house Open: 6am-7pm

North of Beijing Botanical Gardens, the 1,300-year-old Wo Fo Si also houses wintersweet. The 1,300-year-old temple is named after the Sleeping Buddha in the main hall, allegedly the second-largest sleeper in China.

Some 500 meters northwest of the temple lies Ying Tao Gou (樱桃沟 Cherry Valley), another popular ta qing location. Admittance: 2 yuan Open: 8am-4:30pm

To find spring flowers, Baiwangshan (百望山 Mountain of 100 Views) must also be included in the travel plan.

Baiwang Mountain

Five kilometers northeast of Wo Fo Si, the mountain now enters the busy season. Touring the mountain can easily fill a day.

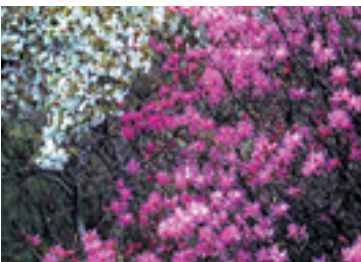
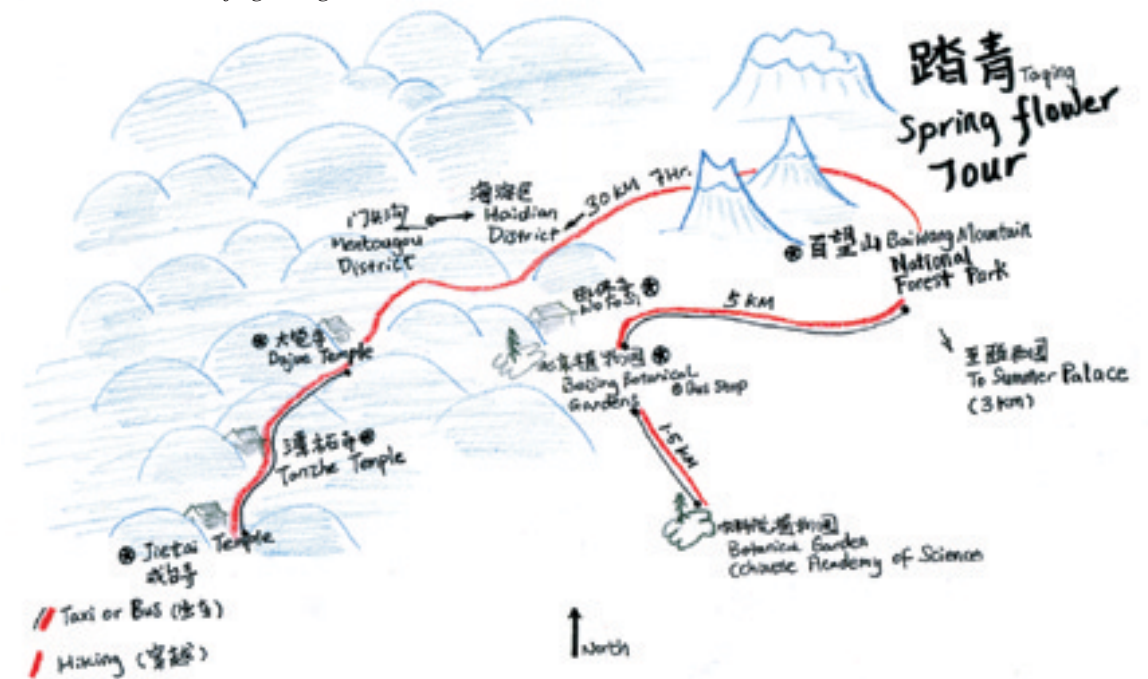
Most of Beijing's spring flowers can be found here. The complex on the top of the mountain supplies a fine view of the flowers, not to mention the city itself.

The park has launched a Forest Path Plan of various hiking routes. The most important scenic spots on the mountain can all be met under the instruction of guides. Baiwang has witnessed many wars since the Western Han Dynasty (206BC-25AD). The most famous



Mountains around Beijing turn green

Photo by Zhao Shiyu



All these flowers will bloom in one week

battlefields include Biesimao (Stifle the cats to death) and Dayingao (Catching the hawks).

Actually a steep valley, the Biesimao is covered with wild flowers in late March. It was said even a cat could not escape the valley if it was lost there.

Dayingao, actually a peak, was once frequented by hawks. The hawking nobles of the Qing Dynasty captured their pets here.

As every Beijing schoolboy knows, the French-Anglo Allied Forces in 1860 sacked the old Summer Palace (Yuanmingyuan). Some of the building materials were used by the French to construct a convent on the second peak of Baiwang Mountain. That convent is now used as a drug rehabilitation center.

Besides hiking, the park also features a 16.8-meter-high wall with 12 difficulty levels for rock climbing enthusiasts.

Getting to Baiwang Mountain: A taxi is recommended between Wo Fo Si and Baiwang Mountain. (15 minutes, 15 yuan) Admittance: 5 yuan Open: 5am-8:30pm

Tips: The tablets in the park bear the calligraphy of Chinese politicians. Mao Zedong's work is housed in a pavilion facing the en-

trance to the park.

The hike route across the park takes at least four hours. If Dajue Temple is included, hiking will take six hours. Guide charge: 150 yuan

Dajue Temple (大觉寺)

Dajue Temple will be decorated with magnolia blossom by the end of March. Built in 1068, Dajue houses the Minghui Tea House.

Getting there: Along the hiking route supplied by Baiwang Mountain (a mini bus will return tourists to their car if they drive); or alternatively hire a taxi from the mountain. (20 minutes, 20 yuan) Admittance: 10 yuan for the temple Open: 8am-5pm

Tips: If time permits, the following attractions can be included. A one-night-stay in the temple is recommended. The attractions above outline Beijing spring.

For a two-day getaway, Tanzhe (潭柘) and Jietai (戒台) temples of Mentougou District should also be added.

Tanzhe, with a history longer than Beijing, is decorated with purple magnolia blossom every March. The greenery in this area is spectacular especially in the spring when fruit trees blossom. In the compound, there is also an an-

cient ginkgo tree known as the emperor's tree that stands 30 meters (98ft) high and was supposedly planted in the Liao Dynasty (916-1125AD).

Jietai Temple, or the temple of the ordination altar, takes its name from its Ming marble ordination altar. The temple plants cloves. Surrounding the main hall are courtyards containing rock formations, old pine and cypress trees. The temple's ancient trees are the subject of songs. It is said a Chinese scholar tree known as the “protector of Buddhism” is more than 1,000 years old. Other famous trees include the “nine dragon tree” which has nine branches that reach up to the sky like nine flying dragons and the “mobile tree” which trembles even when only one branch is slightly touched.

Getting to Tanzhe Temple: Rent a car at Baiwang Mountain or hire a taxi. (45 minutes, 50 yuan). Admittance: 35 yuan Open: 8am-6pm

Getting to Jietai Temple: Taxi from Tanzhe Temple. (Fifteen minutes, 10 yuan) Admittance: 30 yuan Open: 7:30am-5pm

The fifth Western Beijing Temple Fair will be held in the two temples on April 20-June 23.

Taqing around Beijing

Peach Festival at Shidu (十渡)

Activities: stay with local families, admire peach blossom and pick edible wild plants.

When: March 15-April 10

Where: Tianchishan Scenic Spot (天池山风景区), Fangshan District

Admittance: 18 yuan

Getting there: Bus 917 from Tianqiao to Shidu

Apricot Festival at Tao Yuan Xian Gu

Activities: admire apricot and peach blossom; try dishes made of edible wild plants;

When: March 20-June 20

Where: Tao Yuan Xian Gu (桃源仙谷), Miyun County

Admittance: 21 yuan

Getting there: Bus from Dongzhimen to Miyun, taxi to Tao Yuan Xian Gu

Building bird aviaries at Badaling Safari Park

Activities: teach children to make shelters with different materials; setting up aviaries;

When: March -June

Where: Badaling Safari Park, Changping County

Admittance: 70 yuan for adults, 35 yuan for children

Getting there: Bus 919 from Deshengmen to the park

Apricot Festival at Fenghuangling

Activities: admire apricot blossom; try local dishes and tea; horse riding.

When: late March-mid April

Where: Apricot Blossom Garden at Fenghuangling (凤凰岭)

Admittance: 8 yuan

Getting there: bus 346 from the Summer Palace to the garden

Beijing Peach Festival

Activities: tour around Beijing Botanical Garden

When: early April

Where: Beijing Botanical Garden

Getting there: Bus 360 from Chengdu to Maerkang (马尔康) or Lixian (理县) stop at Taoping. Besides the ancient village, tourists can also take a trip to Miyaluo (米亚罗), a scenic spot known as the “Paradise of Red Leaves”, at Sichuan.

Planting trees at Badaling Great Wall

Activities: plant trees at Badaling Great Wall

When: April-October

Admittance: 120 yuan for the rental of tools and entrance to wall

Getting there: Bus 919 from Deshengmen to Xibozi

Flower walk at Hongluo Temple (红螺寺)

Activities: admire peony, cirrus, yulan and wild flowers

When: April 10-May 20

Where: Hongluo Temple

Getting there: Bus 916 from Dongzhimen to Huairou, then taxi to the temple

Admittance: 20 yuan

Circus Festival at Kangxi Grassland (康西草原)

Activities: watch circus and stunts; try paragliding

When: April-October

Where: Kangxi Grassland

Getting there: Bus 919 from Deshengmen to Yanqing, one more bus 920 to the grassland

Admittance: 20 yuan

Waterfall Festival at Qinglianggu (清凉谷)

Activities: flowers and waterfalls

When: April 10-April 30

Where: Qinglianggu Scenic Spot, Miyun

Admittance: 21 yuan

Getting there: Bus from Dongzhimen to Miyun, taxi to the scenic spot

Tulip Festival at Zhongshan Park (中山公园)

When: April 15-May 15

Where: Zhongshan Park, Dongcheng District (next to Tianshanmen)

Admittance: 8 yuan

Bamboo Cultural Festival at Zizhuyuan Park (紫竹院公园)

Activities: Chinese traditional performances; visit bamboo-ware exhibition

When: April 20-May 31

Where: Zizhuyuan Park, Haidian District (near Beijing Zoo)



Chinawide

Minority That Builds on Instinct

By Jiang Zhong

No drawing, measuring tools or brackets were used during construction records the “Biography of the Minority Nationalities in Southwest China”, composed during Eastern Han Dynasty (947-950).

Yet depending on the engineers' experience, these ancient watchtowers survived earthquakes and wars.

The towers have come to symbolize the Qiang Nationality and most boast a history of some 2,000 years.

The 10-30 meters tall towers come

with square, hexagonal or octagonal walls. Stone and mud were used for construction.

The Qiang is one of the oldest minorities in China. Qiang people think human beings superior to animals, but inferior to gods. The layout of their homes demonstrates this notion distinctively.

Their homes usually come in two to five stories. The ground floor stores livestock and farm tools. White stones stand in the four corners of each room. They are worshiped as gods.

Aba Zang and Qiang Autonomous Prefectures of Sichuan Province have the largest Qiang populations. The 2,113-year-old Taoping (桃坪) Village has two watchtowers and much of its traditional lifestyle also remains intact.

Getting there: Taoping is 170 kilometers from Chengdu. Buses from Chengdu to Maerkang (马尔康) or Lixian (理县) stop at Taoping. Besides the ancient village, tourists can also take a trip to Miyaluo (米亚罗), a scenic spot known as the “Paradise of Red Leaves”, at Sichuan.



Women of Qiang Nationality in traditional costume